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BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

MYMENSINGH

[*Price—In India, Rs. 3; In England, 4s. 6d.*]

BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

MYMENSINGH

BY

F. A. SACHSE,

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.

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GAZETTEER

OF THE

MYMENSINGH DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

General description.

THE district of Mymensingh, the largest district in the Presidency of Bengal, lies between 23° 58' and 25° 25' north latitude, and between 89° 49' and 91° 19' east longitude. Taking into account both the area, 6,300 square miles, and the population, 4,526,422, it may well claim to be the largest district in India.

Derivation of name.

The name is derived from the Mymensingh pargana, which, in the time of Akbar, was in the possession of Momin Shah. Tradition says that the reason the Company Collectorate took the name of Mymensingh in preference to that of any of the many other parganas comprised in it was that the zamindars of Mymensingh agreed to pay double the revenue of Alāpsingh, if the zillah was called after their pargana. As a matter of fact the revenue of Mymensingh is double the revenue of Alāpsingh, though the latter pargana is larger in area and certainly not less valuable. It is probable, however, that the choice of name was accidental, in that Mymensingh was the first of the parganas in the list "Mymensingh Pargana Digar," which were separated from Dacca under a Collector of their own in 1787.

Boundaries.

Mymensingh is bounded by no less than eight districts, the Gāro Hills, Dhubri, Rangpur, Bogra, Pābna, Dacca, Tippera and Sylhet. On the west the district is bounded by the main channel of the Brāhmaputra, known as the Jamuna. On the north it is bounded by the Gāro Hills, and on the east by Sylhet and Tippera. For the most part the boundary is marked by small streams, and then towards the south by the Meghna. Bhairab Bazar, where the old channel of the Brāhmaputra meets the Meghna, is in the extreme south-east corner of the district. On the south the boundary is artificial. From the

Jamuna it passes along the northern limits of the Mānikganj subdivision of Dacca through the Madhupur Jungle to Kaorāid. It then runs along the Bunkheroo up to Nayanbazar and from there along the old Brāhmaputra to Bhairab Bazar.

Configuration. The district lies almost in the centre of the Ganges-Brāhmaputra-Meghna delta, which is now said to extend from Cooch Behar and Sylhet in the north to the Sundarbans in the south. At some period in geological history the ocean came up to the foot of the Himalayas and those smaller ranges, the Gāro and Khāsia Hills, which still separate Assam from Bengal. The mountain streams derived from their precipitous descent a force and energy which enabled them to carry away large quantities of rock and at the same time to grind them into fine sand. The older alluvion of the Bengal delta is based on the rock materials which the action of the sun and the ice corroded from the peaks of the Himalayas. Some of this older alluvion still peeps to the surface in the large tract of hard red soil stretching from Dacca town to Jamālpur in the Mymensingh district, which is known as the Madhupur Jungle. Other places where the older alluvion is found are the Barind area in Rājshāhi, Bogra, Dinājpur and Rangpur, where the soil is, however, of a deep yellow rather than a red colour, and in a narrow belt a few miles west of Comilla. In his lecture before the Asiatic Society on February 10th, 1910, Mr. LaTouche ascribes the formation of the Madhupur Jungle to the glacial period when it was the delta of a river entering the sea, which still covered all parts of Bengal south of Goalundo. Major Hirst is, however, of opinion that the red soil is more in the nature of a top dressing and that the earlier deposits of the glaciers lie far deeper than any borings have yet reached. The greater portion of Mymensingh owes its soil to the alluvial action of the existing rivers, chiefly the Brāhmaputra, which by constantly changing its channels has deposited its silt over the northern and western parts of the district. Unlike the earlier hill streams the Brāhmaputra and the Ganges show a scarcely perceptible drop through long distances, and the silt they can carry is of finer material than the *débris* which helped to make the older alluvion. The deposits by which the Brāhmaputra raises its banks at the beginning of every fall consist chiefly of the finest silver sand.

It is hard to understand how a river having gradually raised its banks to a height greatly exceeding that of the surrounding country comes to desert that channel and to cut a completely new course through the lower country to the east.

or west. (*a*) The phenomenon is partly due to the gradual silting up of the bed itself and to a natural tendency to take a short cut through the long sweeps, which any river maintaining the same channel for any time in this country inevitably develops to an incredible extent. (*b*) Possibly the change follows exceptional floods when the main body of the river remains in any flood channel which is lower than its late bed. Whatever the reason, it is certain that the whole of the Jamalpur and Sadar subdivisions are full of old river channels and that the highest *basti* sites are the banks or island *chars* of rivers which have subsequently wandered away.

Natural divisions.

The two banks of the old Brāhmaputra from the foot of the Gāro Hills to Bhairab provide the highest land in the district. At the 1897 earthquake sand broke through the surface in many villages now remote from any considerable river, showing that the whole of the Dewānganj and Sherpur thānas at one time lay in the bed of the Brāhmaputra. The whole of the Jamālpur subdivision together with the Sarisabāri and Durgapur and Fulpur thanas may be assigned to this division.

Madhupur Jungle.

The next division is the Madhupur Jungle. On the whole the limits are well defined and may be seen at a glance from any district map. There is one outlying portion in the middle of the Ghatail thāna, where 23 thāk maps were treated as one unit at the Revenue Survey and called the Garh Gazāli, though this is the name generally applied to the main area also, from the tree which is characteristic of this forest. The soil is a stiff red clay, rich in iron, but deficient in sand. In some places this soil is 100 feet deep, and beneath it again there is sand.

It seems certain that this low level laterite, though lacking in stratification, was originally a deltaic formation and that it has been raised in the course of recent movements of the earth's crust. Major Hirst is of opinion that the upheaval is comparatively recent and that it is still going on. His theory is that there is a compensatory sinkage in a long strip running north and south from Jalpaiguri to Goalundo and corresponding with the present bed of the Jamuna. To the gradual raising of the Madhupur Jungle he attributes the historical

(*a*) The process can be studied with great advantage when riding from Mymensingh to Ramgopalpur.

(*b*) The Kangsha is a good example. It goes 12 miles where it might go 3 between Jaria and Dhotukan. The Mogra near Netrakona has the most extraordinary bends.

changes in the course of the Brāhmaputra and the shifting of the Ganges from its old channel the Dhaleswari.

At first sight this theory is inconsistent with the curious unevenness of the Jungle which is really hilly in parts. Possibly the process of raising has broken the original level surface of the delta, and the Bengal climate has exercised a wearing effect on the less protected portions. In the outlying portions, especially near Kaorāid, there are no hills, but the uniform ridges of red soil are interspersed by basins and serpentine channels of ordinary dark clay which are called *baids*. The steep slope between the mounds and the *baid* is usually overgrown with scrub jungle. The table-lands grow crops of mustard and jute for one or two years, but the soil is really unfertile and the villagers depend mainly on the *baid* lands which grow *āman* rice.

Fossils are very rare in the jungle and give no clue to the date of its formation. It is extraordinarily hot and unhealthy, as the trees keep off all air and are not of a kind to give much shade. The characteristic tree is a bastard *sāl* (*gazāri*). There is a small tract near Gupta Brindāban in which the *sāl* and the scrub jungle give way to massive trees covered with orchids and creepers.

In some of the Sherpur, Halnaghāt and Durgapur villages there are small hillocks and thick jungle, but these are merely outlying portions of the Gāro Hills, not to be considered as part of any natural division of the Mymensingh district.

The general characteristic of the Mymensingh villages which lie near the hills is their extreme flatness, and there are unusually long unbroken stretches of paddy land. There are few trees, and the *khāls* are very narrow, but extremely deep down in their beds and difficult to cross. The really jungly villages of Mymensingh apart from the Garh Gazāli are to be found in the centre, not in the north, of the Fulpur and Durgapur thānas. There is a belt of villages containing huge *bils* and large stretches of coarse thatching grass starting from half-way between Nālitabāri and Piyārpur through Sankarpur to Pāgla, which are more likely to harbour big game than any of the villages north of the Kangsha, Nitāi and Someswari rivers.

In the rest of the district from the comparatively dry Alāpsingh villages in Sadar thānā to the water-logged villages of Astagrām and Khāliajuri, where the only crop that can be grown is *boro* paddy, big *bils* are common and the soil is clay rather than sandy. In the cold weather the soil from

which the *āman* paddy has been cut cakes and cracks and the only good riding is in villages where winter crops are plentiful. The east of the Netrakona and Kishorganj subdivisions form a division by themselves. Rivers and *khāls* are innumerable, and the water subsides so late and rises so early, that the lands on their banks, which appear high and dry in the cold weather, have barely time to grow any crops and are covered with scrub jungle waist high, though the thick beds of *dhub* grass in the more open parts give splendid grazing to cattle. The lower portions never dry up at all, but can be planted with *boro* paddy in January and February. There are no trees and no bamboos. The homesteads, consisting usually of only one hut each, are clustered close together, so that one mound of artificially raised earth can accommodate the maximum of inhabitants. The outlying cowsheds are propped up with bamboos, 12 or 14 feet long, from the adjoining plain. These villages are far apart and, seen from a long distance on a cold-weather morning, have almost the appearance of a mirage. In the cold weather the banks of the rivers are dotted here and there with the temporary huts of fishermen. In the rains even the biggest villages like Khāliajuri and Itna consist of two or three isolated islands with bamboo barriers to protect them from the waves.

Scenery.

In his Gazetteer of Dacca Mr. Allen takes a very pessimistic view of the scenery, describing the country as dull and desolate in the extreme. This cannot be said of many parts of Mymensingh at any season of the year. Except at the ploughing season it is one expanse of vivid green up to the horizon, the whole of which is belted with groups of houses hidden in clusters of graceful bamboos and palms. Single trees, which rival the best of the English varieties for shape and the permanence of their foliage, are here and there prominent in the landscape. In the eastern villages *maths*, like steeples without a church, form conspicuous landmarks, and are often the only means of identifying a distant village. That at Gauhatā south of Nāgarpur can be seen from many of the *chars* in the Serājganj subdivision. On the bank of any river pretty views and camping places are the rule rather than the exception, and some of the village sites on the deep *dahars* or dead rivers in Netrakona and Kishorganj are picturesque in the extreme.

Some of the *bils* as at Fulkocha and Purbadhala are absolutely clear of weeds and quite resemble an English lake. In May and June huge water lilies make the shallower *bils* a blaze of brilliant scarlet.

River system.

The best account of the river system of this part of Bengal I have seen is in Mr. A. C. Sen's Agricultural Statistics for the Dacca district. The Jamuna, nowhere less than 4 miles wide in the rains, forms the western boundary of Mymensingh and the equally important Meghna encloses it on the east. They are connected by the old channel of the Brāhmaputra running through the centre of the district in a south-easterly direction from above Bahādurabad to Bhairab-Bazar. The Dhaleswari, first an old channel of the Ganges and then of the Brāhmaputra, cuts across the south-western corner of the district on its way to join the Meghna at Narāyanganj. The Dhanu, lower down called the Ghorāutra, a fine stream navigable by steamers throughout the year, is a tributary of the Meghna and flows directly southwards from Sonāmganj in Sylhet through the eastern thānās of Netrakona and Kishorganj. Both these rivers fall and rise with the daily tides, and even the *khāls* connected with them a long way inland at places like Gog Bazar and Badla feel the effect of the neap tides. At Gāglājuri the Dhanu is joined by the Kangsha, which, coming from the Gāro Hills past Nālitabāri as the Bhogāi, is at its best in the Netrakona subdivision at Dāotūkon and Barhatta. After Mahanganj it becomes a narrow winding *khāl* with banks little higher than its own lowest level.

The old Brāhmaputra's most important offshoot is the Jināi; striking off near Jamālpur it rejoins the Jamuna north of Sārisabāri, while another branch flows past Gopālpur.

The Bangsha forms a natural barrier to the Madhupur Jungle on the Tangāil side all the way from Madhupur to Mirzāpur. It is only fordable at two or three places near Bāsāil.

The most interesting question in connection with the river system of Mymensingh is when and why the Brāhmaputra changed its main channel. In prehistoric times it is not improbable that it flowed direct south more or less along its present main channel. From the beginning of history to the end of the eighteenth century it flowed past Jamālpur to Mymensingh and Agarasindur. The river practically stretched from Jamālpur to Sherpur, 7 or 8 miles as the crow flies, and the present Shiri was one with it. As to its course through Dacca from Agarasindur, there is some uncertainty. Mr. Sen thinks the old geographers made mistakes and that it did not join the Meghna at Bhairab Bazar, but struck off a mile below Agarasindur at Arālia to Lakhipur and then flowed in a south-westerly direction past Nangalband and Panchamighat to

Rāmpāl, joining the Meghnā not at Kalāgāchia, but at Rājbāri. The dried-up bed between Arālia and Lakhipur is wrongly called the Lakshya in the revenue maps. This river branches off from the Brāhmaputra at Lakhipur.

It has usually been assumed that the change in the course of the main waters of the Brāhmaputra took place suddenly in 1787, the year of the famous flooding of the Tista river. It is, however, well known that the Tista has always been a wandering river, sometimes joining the Ganges, sometimes being shifted eastwards by the superior strength of that river and forced to join the Brāhmaputra. It is now proved that the great Tibetan river Tsangpo joined the Brāhmaputra about 1780, and this accession was of more importance than the Tista floods in deciding the Brāhmaputra to try a shorter way to the sea.

In the middle of the eighteenth century there were at least three fair-sized streams flowing between the present Rājshāhi and Dacca Divisions, viz., the Dāokobā, a branch of the Tista, the Monāsh or Konāi, and the Salāngi. The Lohājang and Elengjāni were also important rivers. In Rennell's time the Brāhmaputra as a first step towards securing a more direct course to the sea by leaving the Madhupur Jungle to the east began to send a considerable body of water down the Jināi or Jabuna from Jamālpur into the Monāsh and Salāngi. These rivers gradually coalesced and kept shifting to the west till they met the Dāokobā, which was showing an equally rapid tendency to cut to the east. The junction of these rivers gave the Brāhmaputra a course worthy of her immense power, and the rivers to the right and left silted up. In Rennell's Atlas they much resemble the rivers of Jessore and Hooghly, which dried up after the hundred-mouthed Ganges had cut her new channel to join the Meghna at the south of the Munshiganj subdivision.

In 1809 Buchanan Hamilton writes that the new channel between Bhowānipur and Dewānganj "was scarcely inferior to the mighty river, and threatens to sweep away the intermediate country." By 1830 the old channel had been reduced to its present insignificance.* It is navigable by country boats throughout the year and by launches in the rains, but as low

* Fisher was deputed in 1830 to report on the causes of the silting up of the Brāhmaputra. Sir Joseph Hooker writing in 1850 says that "we were surprised to hear that within the last 20 years the main channel had shifted its course westwards, the eastern channel silted up so rapidly that the Jamal (Jamuna) eventually became the principal stream."

as Jamālpur it is fordable throughout the cold weather and for two or three months just below Mymensingh also.

As early as 1830 there were resumption proceedings for *chars* which had formed in the new bed, and inquiries showed that many of the new formations were on the site of permanently-settled villages which had been washed away by the changes of the Jamuna and the Dāokobā. The process has gone on ever since, and Buchanan Hamilton's remarks on the villages of Bengal are especially applicable to this area. He says that "a change in the site of a village 4 or 5 miles causes little inconvenience and is considered no more than a usual casualty, which produces on the people no effect of consequence. Even the rich never put up buildings of a durable nature."

Geology. The question of geology has been touched upon in connection with the Madhupur Jungle. There are no stones and no rocks in the district. A reference in the *Ain-i-Akbari* and traces of smelting operations occasionally found prove that iron used to be mined from the Madhupur Jungle, but nothing of the sort goes on now. *Kankar* is found in small quantities. The iron and copper used for the local manufacture of agricultural instruments and cooking utensils is all imported.

Botany. In his "Topography of the Dacca District," written in 1840, Mr. Taylor gave a full account of the vegetable productions of that district. Mr. Sen's "Monograph on the Agriculture of the Dacca District" gives a complete list of the medicinal shrubs with the parts of the plant used and the diseases for which they are beneficial. The botany of the Mymensingh district has never attracted the attention of an expert with special qualifications. From the notes supplied by Babu Iswar Chandra Guha, a pleader of Jamālpur, who has long made a hobby of the subject and experimented with new varieties of fruit trees and shrubs in his own garden, it would appear that what has alre[illegible] een written about Dacca applies equally well to Mymensingh.

The most striking points of the botanical products [illegible] district are the extraordinary number of trees of all [illegible] utility and the semi-wild state in which they grow. There [illegible] a few gardens belonging to Tālukdārs, where orchards are fenced in and fruit trees, chiefly plantains and palms, are planted with some care, but for the most part no trouble is taken to select and protect seedlings or to increase the number of profitable and palatable fruit trees which seem to flourish by accident in or near a few homesteads. It is the same with the bigger trees which are useful for timber. In the Nātor estate in the Madhupur Jungle the *gazāri* or bastard *sāl* is jealously

guarded and made the source of huge profits. The District Board has made expensive, but not consistently successful efforts to grow useful trees at regular intervals along the main roads. The giant trees, like the *banyan*, tamarind, *pipal*, and *aswatha* for the most part grow at the corner of fields, on bits of waste land used for shrines and *hāts*, or in the middle of villages. There is no attempt to plant out nurseries from which the old trees can be gradually supplemented and replaced in places where they will not interfere with agriculture.

The chief fruit trees of the district are the Mango (Bengali *Am*, Latin *Mangifera indica*), Jack (B. *Kānthāl*, L. *Artocarpus Integrifolia*), Litchi (B. *Lichu*, L. *Nephelium*), Tamarind (B. *Tetul*, L. *Tamarindus indica*), Peach (B. *Saptalu*, L. *Prunus persica*), Guava (B. *Sabri-Am*, L. *Psidium Guyava*), Limes, (B. *Lebu*, L. *Citrus Medica*), *Pomelo* (B. *Jambura*, L. *Citrus decumana*), Plantains (B. Kola, L. *Musa sapientum*). Pineapples (B. *Anāras*, L. *Ananas sativa*), Custard apple (B, *Ata*, L. *Anona squamosa*) Monkey's apple or Bulloch's Heart (B. *Nona*, L. *Anona reticulata*), *Bēl*, (L. *Aegle marmelos*), *Papya* (the name is practically the same in English, Latin and Bengali) and various kinds of plums which grow practically wild.

The most important are certainly the plantain and the jack fruit. Both are among the chief articles of barter at every bazar, and the latter is so prolific and grows to such an immense size that it forms a staple article of diet with the poorer people. Mangoes are always attacked by worms before they are ripe, and no good varieties are grown in the district. They are chiefly eaten by school children, who call their summer holidays the *Am Kānthālēr Chuti* and take full advantage of the universal custom that fruit blown down by the wind, wherever it grows, is the property of the finder.

Peaches and litchis grow so well in a few gardens that it is strange that every big householder does not find space for them in his compound. The limes, of which there are endless varieties, are usually deficient in juice, but as they are in all cases practically wild, it is only a question of cultivation. The oranges which are sold in such quantities in the bazars in the cold weather come from Sylhet by boat.

Palm trees grow in every *busti*, the most useful being the cocoanut (*Narikel* ; *Cocos nucifera*) : it flourishes best near the sea, but there are few villages in the more thickly populated parts of the district where this refreshing fruit cannot be found for a touring officer. The shell of the fruit is used for *hookah*

bowls and the fibre for mats and coir mattresses and many other purposes, and cocoanut oil is the valuable product of the kernel. Betelnut (B. *Supari*, L. *Areca catechu*) is still more common than the cocoanut. Its trunk is remarkable for its extreme slenderness and straightness. Parts of the date palm (B. *Khājur*, L. *Phœnix-sylvestris*) are used for all possible purposes, but the fruit is hardly edible, and the palm is chiefly cultivated for the juice which in this district is made into sugar, seldom into toddy.

The fan palm (B. *Tālgāch*, L. *Borassus flabelliformis*) is useful for its fibre and juices rather than its fruit.

In addition to the *gazāri* and the mango, the chief trees used for timber are the *jārul*, a very hard wood used for beams, door-frames and other substantial parts of houses, but chiefly for boat building, a purpose for which it is particularly suited owing to its water-resisting qualities. The *rangi*, of a red colour as its name implies, is another wood used for cheap boats as well as for furniture. The *karai* and the *ajugi*, easily workable woods, are used for rafters and the lighter portions of houses. The jack is used by carpenters for general cabinet making purposes. It resembles the *jām* in its wet-resisting qualities, and for this reason these trees are generally chosen for making posts which have to be imbedded in water. The *royna* is used for cheap bedsteads and the *chambal* (usually imported, though it grows in the Madhupur Jungle) is a favourite for door frames. The *sissoo* has generally to be imported, but the trees in the Collector's garden prove that it grows satisfactorily in Mymensingh. The *gāb* tree bears a rough fruit, which after crushing and boiling provides a tar-like substance of a deep red colour used commonly for caulking the seams of boats. The *simul* or cotton tree is very common, but it is not used as much as would be expected in view of the fact that in Assam it is widely used for making tea boxes.

Nearly all English vegetables grow splendidly in the cold weather, tomatoes and brussels-sprouts going on till quite late in April. The indigenous vegetables are chiefly melons, *brinjals*, marrows, gourds, pumpkins and *arums*.

A few varieties of flowering shrubs are common. The *jhāo* or tamarisk, the first sign of permanence on all *chars*, bears a fine purple bloom in August. The wild rose grows on the Brāhmaputra *chars* and in the wilds of Khāliajuri, but otherwise, except in the Madhupur Jungle, flowers, like butterflies are rare and confined to a few species which do not differ in different localities. Even in the jungle they compare very

unfavourably with the flowers of an English hedgerow. The commonest is the heliotrope coloured "jack jungle", a species of *ageratum*. There are flowering trees similar to the lilac and the laburnum, and the red blossoms of the *simul* and *palâsh* trees make a good substitute for the gold mohur in many open villages where no other tree grows.

The bamboo and the *bet* are good examples of the complex uses to which the commonest flora of the district can be put, but the palms are equally adaptable from the economic point of view.

In addition to all the plants used mainly for medicinal purposes doctors extract remedies for the common diseases from the bark and roots of the mango, *simul*, *tulsi*, and other generally useful trees. The *bēl*, *gāb* and *babul* trees provide gum, the seeds of the tamarind yield oil, which is used in painting idols, and the bark of the guava is used for tanning. Scent is manufactured from the *keora*, a plant rather like the pineapple, which grows in most *busti* jungle.

Reynolds says that in the middle of the nineteenth century the chars in the north-west contained as many tigers as any district in India and that rhinoceros had occasionally been shot. Tigers are still numerous in the Madhupur Jungle and at the foot of the Garo Hills, but without plenty of elephants they are difficult to get. It is possible for a keen sportsman to camp several months in the heart of the jungle, and for kills to be going on all around him without his getting information from the villagers in time to sit up on a tree. Leopards are occasionally shot in all thanas. Bears come down from the hills in the jack fruit season, and are also shot by native shikaris in the Madhupur Jungle. Fauna.

Wild elephants used to work havoc in the northern villages, but now they seem to confine themselves to wrecking boundary pillars. Kheddah operations were conducted in 1915 by the Susang Raj just inside the Garo Hills, and a fine tusker followed the captured elephants nearly two days and was finally made captive in the centre of the Durgapur bazar. Three years ago a proscribed elephant was shot a few miles from the thana.

Wild buffaloes are not unknown in the grass jungle north of Kalmakanda and in the north-west of the Madhupur Jungle.

Sambhor (*Rusa aristotelis*), *barasingha* (*Bucervus duvancellii*) hog deer (*Axis porcinus*) and barking deer (*Cervulus vaginalis*, are all found, the two former rarely and the two latter commonly. The Garos catch *sambhor* in nets and shoot other deer from hiding places near their drinking holes. At Bausan not far from the Mymensingh-Sylhet border there is a

small scrub jungle where hog deer are so numerous that the local shikaris and mahouts call it Harinbagān.

The Bandor or Morkot monkey is common in the Madhupur Jungle. Hooloocks or gibbons can be heard calling at the foot of the Garo Hills, but they are rarely seen.

The pig is seldom to be found, and pig-sticking is an impossibility at the foot of the hills. Among the smaller animals the mongoose and civet cat (*bāghdash*) are extraordinarily common. Hares, as well as foxes and jackals, can generally be put up on an open *char*. The black rabbit (*Lepus hespidus*) used to frequent the Madhupur Jungle. Otters are far from rare, though they want some looking for.

Birds. The chief game birds are the red jungle fowl, which can be seen feeding in the evenings at the foot of the Garo Hills in parties of ten or more. They are very numerous round Singerchala, Jugircopa, Salgrampur and other places in the Madhupur Jungle, though they are very shy. Peacocks live in a regular colony in Kalidas, a village of the Madhupur Jungle. Quail occur in small numbers in many scattered parts of the district, and the blue-breasted quail (*Excalfactoria chinensis*) and grey quail (*columnix communis*) are sometimes met with in large flocks near patches of grass jungle, feeding in the recently cut paddy fields at the foot of the hills. Other birds, which occur only or chiefly near the hills, are the swamp partridge or *kaya* (*Francolinus gularis*), the black-breasted *kālij*, or pheasant (*Durug* among Garos and *mathura* among Bengali shikaris) and possibly the rare wood snipe (*Gallinago nemoricola*). The large egret (*Heroclias alba*) is a conspicuous inhabitant of the Durgapur swamps. Among other birds the black-winged kite (*Elanus melanopterus*), the swallow strike (*Artamus fuscus*) and the lesser *coucal* (*Centropus Bengalensis*) are found here and probably nowhere else in Mymensingh.

The Khāliajuri pargana is famous for its duck shooting. From November till the first warm days of February pintail and many other kinds abound and the jungle growing close to the edge of the lagoon-shaped *bils*, which the larger duck chiefly favour, makes shooting easy. After March the spot-billed duck (*Ancus parcilorhynca*) is the only variety that stays on in any number. It and the rarer pink-headed duck (*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*) breed in the district, and it seems a strange oversight of the Wild Birds' Protection Act to deny them the protection which is given to the cotton and whistling teal.

On the *chars* of the Jamuna there are all varieties of duck, including the rare sheldrake (*Tadorna cornuta*), but they are

much harder to approach. The bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*) arrives about the first week of November. It is only towards the end of February when they are preparing to depart from their favourite *chars* that they occasionally allow a country boat to bring them within reach of a gun.

The grey goose (*Anser Ruburostus*) is only seen early and late in the season, suggesting that it only halts *en passant*.

The water-cock or *kora* (*Gallicrex cristata*) is kept by the villagers for fighting and is bred in a curious way. The eggs are taken from the wild birds' nests and put into a cocoanut shell with some cotton wool; this is then bound tightly mouth downwards over the waist of the finder and the eggs are hatched by the warmth of his body. Many villages contain birds thus bred, and ten rupees is the least sum for which a bird can be bought.

On the Meghna about November large flocks of ruffs and reeves (*Machetes Pugnax*) arrive; the males have by then put off their breeding plumage from which they get their name, but are conspicuous by their larger size. These birds are excellent for the table.

The bittern (*Botauras stellaris*) is found occasionally and the crane or *koolong* (*Grus cinerea*) is also a winter visitor.

The marsh babbler (*Megalurus palustris*) is caught in the reeds in a net trap baited with grass-hoppers and sent by the shikaris to Calcutta, where it presumably appears in the New Market. Round the fishermen's *kholas* there is a constant swarm of kites Brahminy kites, and often fish eagles and ospreys, and in the rivers close by there are often flocks of the curious scissor-billed tern (*Rhyncops albicollis*). One large gull (*Larus Brunneicephalus*) is found in winter and spring on all the large rivers.

Of the eight storks found in India all except the white stork, the marabout and the black stork are to be seen on the *chars* of the Jamuna, the commonest being the adjutant (*B. hargila*, L. *Leptoptelus dubius*), the painted stork (*ganghil*) and the white-necked or beef-steak stork (*manikjor*). The jabim (*Loharjung*) and the open bill (L. *Onastomus elegans* *B. shambuk bhanja*) as well as the ibises frequent inland *bils*. The spoon-bill (L. *Platalea leucordia*, B. *chamuch buza*) has been seen near Porabari steamer station. Among the smaller wading birds the avocet (L. *Recurvirostra avocetta*, B. *kusya chaha*) is not uncommon. Its peculiar up-turned bill and its pied plumage, as well as the fact that it is generally considered

a rarity, make it an interesting inhabitant of the *chars*. Its relation the stilt (*Himantopus charadrius* B. *Lal tengi*) is commoner and also more suitable for the table. The curlew (*Numenius arquata*, B. *kanchichora*) and the whimbrel are not common on the Jamuna. The green-shank (*Sotanus glottis*) frequents half-hidden pools of water everywhere, but its unmistakeable note betrays its presence. The little green-shank (*Sotanus stagnatilis*), the red-shank (*Sotanus calidus*) and the grey plover (*Squatarola helvetica*) are found occasionally. The Indian lapwing (*Sacrogramnus Indicus*, B. *titi*) is ubiquitous in the big river, and as soon as the August floods begin to subside the first companies of golden plover (*Charadrius fulvus*) settle on the chars and search the newly deposited mud for food, rising at times in flocks to search for fresh feeding grounds. At this period they are unusually tame, like ducks in England after a sudden thaw, and will almost certainly form part of the first "bag" of the shooting season. Of smaller birds the little ring plover (*Aegialitis dubia*), the spotted sand-piper (*Sotanus glavola*), the common and the green sand-pipers (*Sotanus hypolencus* and *S. ochrops*) the swallow-like small pratimcole (*Glareola lactia*) and the little stint (*Tringa minuta*) are all common. Another somewhat uncommon bird which, like the avocet, will probably be found in greater numbers on the Jamuna than elsewhere, is the great thick knee or "goggle-eyed" plover (*Esacus recurvirostris*). Its large size and its unmistakeable beak, more suitable for a crow than a plover, and its eyes, as conspicuous as the eyes of a painted snipe or woodcock, are all remarkable, and quite justify the difficulty which naturalists have found in classifying it.

Snipe are plentiful, but it is not always easy to find them. Near Astagrām, Dholapārā and Mādarganj they have been shot in great numbers at various times. The varieties include fantail, pintail and jack. The so-called ortolans, strictly the short-toed lark, feed on ploughed fields in large flocks in April. The other birds of the district can be studied to most advantage in the Madhupur Jungle.

I am indebted for the following notes to Mr. L. R. Fawcus, I C.S.

Bulbuls.—The two commonest species are *Pycnonotus pygæus*, the common bulbul, and *Otocompsa jocosa*, the red-whiskered or soldier bulbul. The Assamese bulbul (*Rubigula flaviventris*), appeared unexpectedly common in March and April. It generally associates in pairs and is often

found on mango and other large trees in blossom, hunting for insects. The gold-fronted green bulbul, (*Phyllornis aurifrons*) is fairly common. It is shyer and more arboreal in its habits than other bulbuls. The white-winged iora (*Iora typhia*) also occurs, chiefly in scrub jungle.

Orioles.—The only oriole I found in the jungle is (*Oriolus melanocephalus*), the Bengal black-headed oriole.

Leiotrichinae.—An unexpected discovery was *Zosterops palpebrosus*, the white-eyed tit. This bird is stated by Jerdon not to occur at all in Lower Bengal. The flock from which I got specimens was associating with another Himalayan bird, the red honeysucker, on a large flowering tree in deep jungle. The tits were hunting for insects.

Parus cinereus.—The Indian grey tit should occur in the jungle as I have seen it twice in other parts of Mymensingh in the cold weather.

The Timalinæ.—Two somewhat rare birds of this family occur in the Madhupur Jungle, one being *Trichastoma Abbotti*, the brown-backed tit babbler, which I found fairly common in one locality in March. It goes about in small flocks, flying short distances at a time much after the manner of the seven sisters. It is not such a noisy bird. I also found *Mixornis rubicapillus*, the yellow-breasted wren babbler, in small flocks hunting among the upper branches of mango trees. The common babbler or seven sisters (*Malacocircus terricolor*) is common everywhere.

Of the *Sylviadæ* the tailor bird (*Orthotomus longicauda*) and the greenish tree warbler, (*Phylloscopus viridanus*) are common. Of the *Corvidae* the Indian corby (*Corvus culminatus*) and the Indian crow (*Corvus splendens*), and the Indian magpie (*Dendrocitta rufa*) are all common. Of the mynas *Acridotheres tristis* and *A fuscus* are the two common varieties. The pied starling (*Sturnopastor contra*) is also very common: rarer kinds are the bank myna (A. *ginginianus*) and the grey-headed myna (*Temenuchus Malabaricus*). This bird associates in small flocks of seven or eight and is far more arboreal in its habits than the other mynas.

Laniadae.—The commonest shrikes of the jungle are the black-headed shrike (*Lanius nigriceps*) and the grey-backed shrike (*Lanius tephronotus*). *Tephrodornis Pondiceriana*, the wood shrike, is also fairly common. The large cuckoo shrike (*Graucalus Macei*), is a striking inhabitant of the open parts of the jungle. It goes about usually in pairs and has a striking call-note.

Volvocivora melaschistos, the dark-grey cuckoo shrike, is found more rarely. It is a solitary bird, and has the habit of haunting the same trees in the jungle day after day. Unlike the large cuckoo shrike, it does not seem to descend to the ground. The small minivet (*Pericrocotus peregrinus*) has striking colouring, and is one of the few birds which is often to be found among the somewhat sparse foliage of the *gazāri* tree. Its Bengali name *Satsati kapi* means "beloved of seven damsels," and is said to be given to it not for its beauty, but because one male bird usually associates with six or seven females.

Among the Drongos *Dicrurus macrocercus*, the common king crow, and *Chaptia ænea*, the bronzed drongo, are the commonest. I have twice seen the splendid *Edolius Paradiseus* or large racket-tailed drongo.

Phaenicophainae.—The *koel* (*Eudynamis honoratus*) is common throughout the jungle. The large green-billed *malkoha* (*Rhopodytes tristis*) is conspicuous for its large size and long tail. It keeps to thick jungle, but is not particularly shy; it has a curious habit, when suspicious of observation, of remaining motionless with its head averted from the spectator, thus, by accident or design, effectually concealing its vivid green beak and conspicuous red orbital skin. It feeds on beetles and grasshoppers. *Centropus Sinensis*, the common *coucal* or crow pheasant, is extremely common. I have seen (*C. Bengalensis*), the lesser coucal, in Durgapur, but not in the jungle.

Cuculidae.—I have once clearly heard the English cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) in March in the jungle. *C. micropterus*, the Indian cuckoo, whose note is represented by the words "Make more pekoe" is common, as is also the brainfever bird or hawk cuckoo (*Hierococcyx varius*). Other cuckoos found are the plaintive cuckoo (*Cacomantis Passerinus*) and the rufous-bellied cuckoo (*Cacomantis Merulinus*).

Muscicapidae.—*Stoparola Melanops* (blue canary) is fairly common in thick jungle. It appears to keep chiefly to high trees. *Culicicapa Ceylonesis*—(grey-headed flycatcher) is the commonest flycatcher in the Madhupur jungle. In habits it resembles our English flycatcher, sitting at no great height from the ground and making frequent sallies to catch its insect prey. *Hypothymis azurea*—(black-naped flycatcher) is only locally distributed. I did not see it at all in February, but in March it appeared commonly in places I had searched thoroughly a month earlier. On the wing the shining blue of this bird is

strangely inconspicuous. The white-throated fantail (*Rhipidura albicollis*) is a common bird in the jungle. It differs from any other flycatcher I have seen in its habit of keeping very low down and flitting from bush to bush more in the fashion of the *Turdidæ*. In habits it is distinctly unlike a flycatcher, though its structure makes it difficult to place elsewhere.

Nectarinidae.—Mymensingh district has proved to be unexpectedly rich in these small birds.

The *Chalcoparia Phœnicotis* (ruby cheek) differs from all *Nectarinidæ* by the absence of serrations in the mandibles. It is not uncommon in the jungle, and though it keeps to somewhat lower vegetation than the sun-birds and flower-peckers, I certainly did not see it go about in the under-growth and in parties of five to ten as Davison describes. I observed it in March and have no reason to believe from the results of dissection that it was breeding at this time.

Aethopyga Seheriæ, for which Jerdon's name of red honeysucker is more appropriate than Blanford's yellow-backed honeysucker, is unexpectedly common. It searches for insects at the tops of high trees in blossom, occasionally descending lower for a few moments. An immature male shot on March 10th had no lengthened tail feathers, while the red and violet hues were only just beginning to appear. This is not a winter plumage, as I saw males in full plumage on the same day and at the same place. The female is greenish-olive with a few red markings on the back.

The common sun-bird of the jungle, *Arachnechthra Asiatica*, is comparatively tame and can be found almost everywhere. Another sun-bird, *A. Zeylonica*, I have seen several times. Its yellow breast is conspicuous, and as it was near enough to distinguish with glasses the curved bill and short tail, I do not think there can be any doubt as to its identity.

Dicaeum Cruentatum. I obtained this bird at Kendua and saw it at Hossenpur, but never to my knowledge in the Madhupur jungle. It certainly should appear there. *D. Erythrorhynthus*, Tickell's flower-pecker, is common. I found a nest in March, dome-shaped with an opening in the side and lined with silky fibres, pendant to a branch of a small shrub about 6 feet high. Three eggs were in it: as they were hard set, this is probably the full number laid.

Turdidae, *Pratincola Maura*, the Indian bush chat, is found commonly on the outskirts of the jungle.

Pratincola leucura, the white-tailed bush chat, is described by Blanford as a Mymensingh bird, and hence in all probability occurs. I never found it. *Ruticilla rufiventris*, Indian Redstart, is common. It appears to be especially fond of frequenting the piles of *gazari* timber, which are collected for sale in various parts of the jungle. *Calliope Camtschatkensis*, the Ruby Throat, is uncommon. I found it only once at Kakrajan. *Copsychus Saularis*, the common Magpie-Robin or *dayal* is ubiquitous. *Cittocincla Macrura*, the Shama: in all retired parts of the jungle and above all in the neighbourhood of the old half-silted tanks this splendid songster is found. It is not as shy as it is reputed to be, and will allow one to stand within a few yards of it listening to its song. *Geocichla citrina*, Orange-breasted Ground Thrush. This Himalayan bird is fairly common in winter in the jungle. Like the Shama, it haunts the old disused tanks and drying *khāl* beds, hunting among the leaves for insects. Those I have dissected appear to feed mainly on beetles. *Petrophila Solitaria*, the Eastern blue rock thrush is uncommon. *Oreocincla Dauma*, Small-billed mountain Thrush. I obtained a specimen of this Himalayan bird in February close to Salgrampur. It was feeding among dead leaves and went away with a very direct flight almost like a game bird.

Of the *Fringillidæ*, *Ploceus Baya*, the *baya* or weaver bird is very common. *Munia Atricapilla*, the chestnut-bellied munia, is the rarest of the three munias found in the jungle. I only saw a flock on one occasion late in March. *Uroloncha Punctulata*, the spotted munia is common. *Sporæginthus Amanbava*, the red wax-bill is also common, but appears to keep more to the outskirts of the jungle.

Wagtails, Pipits and Larks are not jungle birds in general. *Anthus Maculatus* (Indian tree pipit) is, however, commonly found even in deep jungle in small flocks.

Picidae—*Gecinus striolatus*—Small green wood-pecker is locally distributed, but not rare.

Dendrocopus Macei, Indian spotted wood-pecker, is rare. *Micropternus Phæoceps*, Rufous wood-pecker, is common. *Brachypternus Aurantius*, Golden-backed wood-pecker, is found everywhere.

Iyngipicus—(Pigmy wood-pecker).—The only specimen of this genus which I shot is an intermediate form between *I. Hardwickii* and *I. Canicapillus*.

Capitonidae.—*Thereiceryx Zeylonicus*, the common barbet, and *Zantholæma Hæmatocephala*, the coppersmith, are very common.

Coracias Affinis, the Roller (blue-jay) is common everywhere.

Merops Viridis, common Bee-eater, is also ubiquitous. *Merops Philippinus*, blue-tailed Bee-eater, is found occasionally, but is much rarer and shyer.

Alcedininae.—*Ceryle varia*, (pied king-fisher), and *Alcedo Ispida* (common king-fisher), are found wherever there is water.

Halcyon Smyrnensis, White-breasted king-fisher, is found often far away from water in dense and dry jungle.

Pelargopsis Gurial, Brown-headed king-fisher, is fairly common.

Bucerotidae.—I have seen a pair of hornbills twice, but cannot identify them with certainty. Their plumage was black and white and beaks and casque yellow.

Upupa Indica, Indian hoopoe, is quite common, as is *Tachornis Batassiensis*, the palm swift.

Caprimulgus Macrurus, Horsfield's nightjar, and *Caprimulgus Monticolus*, Franklin's nightjar, are the common nightjars of the jungle.

Of the Parrots, *Palæornis Torquatus*, Rose-ringed paroquet, is very common, *Palæornis Rosa*, Eastern blossom-headed paroquet, is less common.

Of the Owls *Ketupa Zeylonensis*, Brown fish owl, is the commonest. *Athene Brama*, spotted owlet, is found.

Accipitres.—*Pandion Haliætus*, the osprey, is common on the *bils* on the outskirts of the jungle.

Of the Vultures, *Otogyps Calvus*, the "King vulture," *Pseudogyps Bengalensis*, common vulture, are common. *Gyps Indicus*, the long-billed vulture is found more rarely.

Ictinætus Malayensis, the black eagle is to be seen at times soaring over the jungle. The commonest of the eagles are *Spizætus Limnætus*, the changeable hawk eagle; *Circætus Gallicus*, common serpent eagle; *Spilornis Cheela*, crested serpent eagle; *Haliætus Leucoryphus*, Pallas fishing eagle, *Polioætus Icthyætus*, grey-headed fishing eagle. I have seen *Pernis Cristatus*, the honey buzzard, once or twice, but it is not common. The common kite the Brahminy kite, the *shikra* (*Astur Badius*), the Kestrel (*Tinnunculus Alaudarius*) are all common and the red-headed merlin or *turumti* (*Æsalon Chicquera*) is also found.

Columbidae.—Two green pigeons, *Crocopus Phœnicopterus*, the Bengal green pigeon and *Treron Bicincta*, the orange-breasted green pigeon are not confined to the jungle. The former is very common and associates in large flocks except at breeding time. I found its nest in April with two eggs in a small tree not more than 5 feet from the ground. The latter is rarer, and does not associate in large flocks, nor is it found in the drier parts of the jungle. It prefers the neighbourhood of water. I did not find any imperial pigeons but Koch shikaris know the birds as *pogoma*, a name used for them also in Chittagong and Assam. The shikaris said that these birds used to be common, but are now only to be found in the neighbourhood of Mullickbāri on the east of the jungle. Presumably the birds referred to are *Ducula Aenea*, the green imperial pigeon.

The emerald dove, *Calcophaps Indica*, is a beautiful resident of the deeper parts. As the cold weather draws to an end and water becomes scarcer these shy birds seem to get tamer, and on a dry March evening I have seen as many as a dozen come down to drink at an old tank in the middle of the jungle. The Indian blue rock pigeon (*Columba Intermedia*) is common here as everywhere, and among doves the rufous turtle dove (*Turtur Orientalis*), the spotted dove (*T. Suratensis*), the Indian ring dove (*T. Risorius*) and the red turtle dove (*Oenopoplia Tranquebarica*), are all found.

Snakes. The cobra (*gokhur*) is fortunately somewhat rare in Mymensingh. The commonest poisonous snake is the banded krait easily distinguished by its broad black and yellow bands. The krait is also found and is usually spoken of as the *dhomun*. This snake is difficult to identify, as it is susceptible to much variation of colour and resembles a harmless snake (*Lycodon Aulicus*). A poisonous water snake *Hydroptus Nigrocunctus*, distinguishable by its flat tail, is reported to be common in the Meghna, where it is at times captured in the fishermen's nets. Its colour is greenish olive encircled by about 50 black rings. Pythons have been killed in Mymensingh town. Lizards and *guisaps* of all sizes inhabit patches of jungle even in the towns. Crocodiles occasionally appear in the Brahmaputra, and they are common in the Jinjiram and some of the tributaries of the Meghna.

Fish. Fisheries are dealt with in the chapter on occupations. Most of the rivers and *bils* swarm with fish, and as soon as a drop of rain has fallen fishing also goes on in every paddy field and ditch. Taylor devotes several pages to a description

of the fish of Dacca, and it would be waste of space to give a list of the fishes found. All information can be had in Mr. K. C. De's report of 1910. The fish most favoured for eating are the *rohit*, *katal*, *mirka* and *baus*, all *Cyprinidæ* which grow to a large size in big rivers—one maund is said to be the record for one fish—the *sing*, *boal* and *gaura* among the *Siluridæ*, the *chital* (*Mystus Chitala*) and the *Phyasa* or Indian herring. Mullets are to be found in shoals near the banks of the shallow *khâls* of Khāliajuri. They swim on the surface like frogs. *Hilsa* are chiefly imported, being caught in the Meghna and Jamuna below the confines of this district. The *māhseer*, which resembles the salmon, is caught in the Someswari and occasionally in the Jamuna, where it commands a very heavy price with the natives. Prawns, (*chingri*) sometimes reaching a very large size, come to Mymensingh in great numbers by train.

The temperature continues uniform from the middle of February to October, the average maximum falling from 91° in April to 86° in October. The highest average minimum temperature is 78° in July, August and September, and the mean temperature is almost constant at 82°. In 1871 it was 83·66. The average minimum temperature falls to 53° in January and the mean temperature to 64°. Climate.

The monsoon rainfall begins in June, but there are often as many wet days in April and May as in either July or August. Owing to the ascensional motion of the monsoon current caused by the Gāro Hills the rainfall is heavier than in other inland districts of Bengal.

The total fall is usually between 85 and 100 inches, but 134 inches were recorded in 1865, and 57 only in 1883. The rainfall is very unevenly distributed between the months in different years, *e.g.*, in 1912 the heaviest was 26·38 in June, 24·19 in August and 17·97 in April. In 1914 September was the wettest month, May the next, and June and July only gave 5·91 and 9·65 inches respectively. In 1913 June again had, the heaviest rainfall, April and March having less than 2 inches each. October varies from 9·28 to 4·42 and November may have 5·74 as in 1912, or nothing at all.

Owing to the constant rain and the high winds it is not unusual to have cooler weather in April and May than in February and March. The nights seldom get hot before the end of May, and in the autumn months there is nearly always a cool breeze from the east or south-east. In spite of the high degree of humidity Mymensingh is much cooler than any of the districts of the Rajshāhi Division.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

SOME account of the changes which resulted in Mymensingh becoming a separate district in 1786 will be found in the Chapter on General Administration. Until that date the history of Mymensingh is the history of Dacca. In this Gazetteer therefore only a brief skeleton of the earlier history of Eastern Bengal will be given, so as to keep all available space for the history of parganas. Mymensingh was never the seat of any line of princes, and the only places within its boundaries that are at all prominent in the ancient records are Agarasindur and Sherpur.

The first Aryan settlers in Bengal confined themselves to the valley of the Ganges. At the time of the *Mahabhārata* Mymensingh formed part of Prāgjyotish, which 3,000 years later in Buddhist times was known as Kāmrup. The western boundary of Kāmrup was the Karatoya, a river which still runs out of Nepal parallel to the Atrāi through Rangpur and Pābna; so the present bed of the Jamuna and considerable strips of the Rājshāhi division districts as well as the northern parganas of Mymensingh must have been included in Kāmrup.

The difficulty is with the southern limits. According to the Jogini Tantra, as also Abul Fazal, the author of the *Ain Akbāri*, the confluence of the Brāhmaputra and the Lakshya rivers was the southern boundary of Kāmrup, and Gladwin puts this down as near the Ekdāla shown in Rennell's map on the bank of the Bānār river. This view is consistent with those authorities who include all parts of Mymensingh south of the old Brāhmaputra in the kingdom of Varendra or North Bengal, which adjoined Kāmrup on the west. Fergusson, for example, says that the Pāla kings, with Gaur in Malda as their capital, were ruling east of the Karatoya long after Bengal had been subdued by the Sens. Gait also in his History of Assam speaks of the whole of the country between these rivers as the Matsya Desh,* which may or may not have been an outlying part of

* Matsya Desh, according to the Mahabharata, is a place south of Indraprastha or Delhi. *Vide* map, Royal Asiatic Society.

Varendra, but was certainly not part of Kāmrup. Dr. Taylor and others think that the Dhaleswari, which was the oldest channel of the Ganges, and the Buriganga on which Dacca lies were the boundary, and in that case the whole of Tangāil and the Madhupur Jungle were included in Kāmrup. This view would leave little room for Banga, the kingdom of the Sens which lay between Varendra and the Meghna. If in 650 A.D. the kingdom of Samatata comprised Tippera, Banga may have consisted of Farīdpur, Bikrampur and the Sundarbans.

The earliest information about these kingdoms comes from the accounts of Thibetan and Chinese travellers in the 6th and 7th century after Christ. In their day Mymensingh was more Buddhist than Hindu. The old ruins, chiefly tanks in the Madhupur Jungle, are possibly of the eighth century and they are associated with the name of Bhaga Datta, who has sometimes been confused with the famous Kāmrup King of that name. Kāmrup was in its prime about 800 A.D. It ceased to be able to defend its outlying territories, and the Pāla kings of Panduā became the chief champions of Buddhism against the encroachments of the Hindu princes who had established themselves in various capitals in the Ganges valley. In the first quarter of the twelfth century the Pāla Rājā of Gaur found a new rival in Vijaya Sen, who had made himself a capital in Bengal. Vijaya Sen won a pitched battle, and his son Ballāl Sen set himself to consolidate the new kingdom. He was the founder of Kulinism, and there is evidence that he gave lands in Jamurki and Bhadra, two Tangāil villages, to some of the Brāhmans, whom it was his policy to settle as widely as possible throughout his dominions. The fact that Kulinism is much stronger in the west of the district than in the east goes to show that the parganas north and east of the Brāhmaputra were still under the influence of Kāmrup and its outlying Koch Chieftains. There is an old proverb "*Paschime Ballali Purbe Masnad Ali*," which is still quoted against inhabitants of these parganas who boast of their family prestige.

The first Muhammadan inroads into Eastern Bengal were the work of independent bands with no authority from the Court of Delhi. There is a tradition that the very first Muhammadan settlement in Mymensingh was at Madanpur near Netrakona, where their leader, a saint called Shāh Sultān, lies buried. The inscription on his tomb has not been deciphered. His descendants are still called Khadem Fakirs. The tomb of Pīr Shāh Jamāl is at Kāgmāri and that of a similar leader called Bābā Adam Kashmīri is at Atia. The first

emperor of Delhi who sent an army to Bengal was Kutubuddin, about 1212. In 1282 Bulbān himself took an army down the Brāhmaputra as far as Sonārgāon. In 1299 we find Bāhādur Khān appointed Governor of Eastern Bengal. He declared himself independent in 1324, but the next emperor, Ghiāsuddīn Tughlak, defeated him and appointed Tātar Khān in his place.

In 1338 the armour-bearer Fakruddin declared himself king in place of his deceased master Bikram Khān, the Governor of Sonārgāon. His successor was Ilyas, and after him his son Sikandar. Both reigns are chiefly noted for invasions by the Delhi emperors in person and the sieges of the famous fort Ekdālā on the banks of the Bānār river, where the Sonārgāon Governors fled for refuge. A Hindu king, Rāja Kans, then supervened. He is said to have oppressed Islām, but his son Jalāluddin embraced the Muhammadan faith.

Husain Shāh reigned from 1494-1524, and was strong enough to make expeditions to Assam and to conquer a border kingdom of Kāmrup, the "Aso" of old maps. It had lands on both banks of the Brāhmaputra from Karāibāri to Gauhāti; full accounts of these expeditions by a contemporary Persian writer are to be found in the Journals of the Asiatic Society.

Husain Shāh was succeeded by his son Nasrat Shāh, and Nasrat by Firoz. Mahmūd the next king was decisively beaten by Sher Shāh, who in 1539 defeated Humayun and ascended the throne of Delhi. To consolidate his conquest, this emperor, the first of the Afghans, is said to have made a trunk road from Sonārgāon to Upper India complete with stage bungalows and wells. After dividing Bengal into provinces he left Kāzi Fazilat as his Viceroy or Amir over all three provinces, Bihar, Orissa and Bengal. From 1553-1573 Bengal again became independent under Pathan rulers, but after the reign of Akbar all attempts at independence ceased. In 1579 the office of Dewān or finance minister was created to relieve the Viceroy, henceforth usually styled the Nāzim, of part of his responsibilities, and until the time of Murshid Kuli Khān these officials were both nominated by the Emperor and acted as a mutual check on each other's ambitions. In 1582 came the settlement of Todar Mal by which Bengal was divided into 19 sarkārs. Most of the parganas of Mymensingh fell within the sarkar of Bāzuha, which was assessed at 10 elephants, 1,700 cavalry, 45,300 infantry and 9,87,921 rupees. It included also many of the parganas of Rājshāhi, Dacca, Bogra and Pābna.

It was at this time that Isā Khān of Khijirpur, one mile from Nārāyanganj, being defeated by the Emperor fled to

Kishorganj and, besieging a Koch Chieftain Lakhan in Jangalbāri, established himself there. He fought a famous battle with Mān Singh, the Emperor's general, and eventually won the favour of the Emperor and was given the 22 parganas as his reward. His family still survives in reduced circumstances at Jangalbāri and Haibatnagar. Isā Khan was the greatest of the 12 Bhuyas,* who took advantage of the weakness of the Imperial authority and the unruliness of the Afghan bands to carve out for themselves independent principalities in Bengal. Bhuya is the same word as Bhumik, and we have Shore's authority for saying that Bhumik and zamindar are the same. The title, being Hindu, may have come originally from the Gaur princes. The only other Bhuya who had any connection with Mymensingh was the first owner of the Bhawal estate, whose headquarters were at Bāligāon in the south of the Madhupur jungle.

In 1608 Islam Khān was made Viceroy and transferred the seat of Government from Rājmahal to Dacca. His general, Shuja Khān, won some signal victories against the Afghan prince of Orissa, who tried to invade Bengal in 1611. In his reign the festival of the Janmastami was inaugurated in honour of the goddess Lakshmi and the god Narayan, for whose idols, brought from Durgapur, a new temple was built at Dacca in 1613.

Kasim Khān his brother, the next Viceroy, failed to do anything against the Portuguese under Gonzales, who established himself in the island Sandwip. He was succeeded by Ibrahim Khan, who was slain in a battle with Sh h Jahān. The latter, after an unsuccessful revolt against his father the Emperor Jahāngir, established himself in Orissa and then, advancing northwards, made himself master of Burdwān and of Dacca, where the accumulated Government treasure was at this time 40 lakhs of rupees.

Shāh Jahān was ruler of Bengal for two years. After his defeat by the imperial armies, Dacca remained under some insignificant viceroys till Shāh Jahān, himself becoming emperor on the death of Jahāngir, appointed one Kāsim Khan Jobuny in 1628. In the next viceroyalty of Azim Khān the English obtained their first farmān dated 2nd February 1634 allowing them to trade in Bengal. Islam Khān Mushedi captured Chittagong and also engaged in a successful campaign in Assam, twice defeating Baldeo, the rebel prince of Koch Hajong.

* Wise—Bara Bhuyas of E. B., J. A. S. B., 1874, Vol. 40

Sultan Shah Shuja succeeded him and again transferred the seat of government to Rājmahāl. He was drowned in Arracan, where he had fled for refuge after an unsuccessful revolt against Aurangzeb. During his time the British, largely through the good offices of Surgeon Broughton, who had made himself useful to the imperial family, gained largely increased facilities for trade. Mir Jumla, the successful general of Aurangzeb, established his headquarters at Dacca as viceroy, conquered Cooch Behar and then engaged in a great campaign against Assam. He was popular as well as able, and his death in 1663 was regretted by all factions.

Shaista Khān was Nawāb or viceroy for two separate periods (1664-1677 and 1679-1689). During this period Dacca reached its prime. Owing to the system of export duties all provisions were very cheap and the western gate was closed to commemorate the fact that rice fell to the record price of 640 lbs. to the rupee, and the people were so prosperous that labour was difficult to hire. He abolished monopolies, and in the lands of his own jāigir ordered the refund to ryots of all moneys paid in excess of the fixed revenue. Shaista Khān was engaged in several conflicts with the Company's fleet which attacked Chittagong, but in spite of the bad reputation he incurred with the Company's servants, trade made great progress and his successor, Nawāb Ibrahim Khān, found it politic to allow the Company to reoccupy all their factories. The revolt of Subha Singh, a zamindar of Burdwān, and the failure of the viceroy to prevent the disturbance spreading, was the excuse under which the Dutch strongly fortified Chinsura, the French Chandernagore and the English Calcutta. When the Emperor heard of the revolt he appointed his grandson Prince Azīmus-shan to the united Governments of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and in the meantime sent the Nawāb's son Zabardast Khan against the rebels. The rebellion came to an end with the death of Rahim Shah, who headed the rebels after the death of Subha Singh in 1698, but Azim was not a strong man and soon became jealous of the power of Murshid Kuli Khan, whom Aurangzeb himself had appointed as Dewān in Dacca. An ineffectual attempt was made to assassinate Murshid Kuli, who sent a report to the Emperor and then moved his residence to Murshidabad. The Emperor severely reprimanded his grandson and made him move his headquarters to Bhiar; his second son Farrukh Siyar, under the superintendence of Sher Balund Khan, was left as Deputy Nāzim in Dacca.

In spite of several changes of emperors, some of whom he had personally injured, Murshid Kuli Khān was successful in keeping his appointment as Dewān and subsequently as Viceroy of the three provinces until his death in 1724. He was a splendid financier, and under his administration the province of Bengal, while still maintaining its own standing army, became a source of profit to the Delhi exchequer. After the death of Murshid Kuli Khān the post of Nāzim or Nawāb, as the Viceroy of Bengal was now generally called, tended to become hereditary, and he appointed the Dewān and Naib or Deputy Dewāns. Murshid Kuli was succeeded by his son-in-law Shujāuddin Khān, who had hitherto been Deputy Dewān in Orissa. He had a strong council, including Alivardi Khan and Jaswant Rai, and the province enjoyed such prosperity that the price of rice again fell to 640 lbs. per rupee and the western gate closed by Shaista Khan was reopened. Shujā however, as he grew old, left affairs to his less capable son Sarfaraz Khan and a greedy batch of ministers. Their quarrels ended in a revolt by Alivardi Khan, who killed Sarfaraz Khan in battle. The new Governor's best years were taken up with campaigns against the Mahrattas, who between 1741 and 1754 continually invaded Orissa and Bengal. His grandson and successor, Sirajuddaula, hated the English, but was neither brave enough nor clever enough to press the quarrel to a successful issue. His capture of Calcutta in 1756 and the murder of the European residents in the Black Hole were avenged by the battle of Plassy in the next year.

After the death of Sirajuddaula the resulting anarchy led to the English Company making themselves responsible in 1765 for the revenues and civil administration of Bengal. Mahamad Reza Khān was the Deputy Dewān under the Company in Murshidabad, and at their instigation Jasarat Khan was appointed Naib Nāzim in Dacca. A member of Council was sent to Dacca under the title of Chief, and as in the days of Murshid Kuli Khan, before he was formally appointed Viceroy, the Dewān was the *de facto* Nāzim. In theory the Company still held the districts specially ceded to them as zamindars on payment of revenue to the Nāzim, and in the rest of the country they carried on through native agencies the traditional functions of the Dewan. In 1769 a Superintendent of Revenue was appointed, and in 1774 Middleton replaced Reza Khan as Deputy Dewan. Though 1779 was the date of Rennell's survey, the country was still far from settled. The difficulty of communication and the impossibility of moving troops

quickly in a country destitute of roads and everywhere cut up by rivers and *khāls* gave the European officials little chance of coping immediately with the outlaws and dacoits who preyed on the trade of the unwarlike residents of the towns. Henceforth the only historical events of any interest connected with Mymensingh are the inroads of the Gāros described in the history of the Sherpur Pargana, and the rebellion of the Sanyāsis. These people are described in a long minute of John Elliot, dated 29th April 1789, to the Board of Revenue, as in reality usurers, disguised as religious friars. The following description from the pen of Warren Hastings himself in a letter to Josias De Pre, dated 9th March 1773, is found in Greig's Memoirs :—

"Our own province has worn something of a warlike appearance this year, having been infested by a band of sanyasis, who have defeated two small parties of Perganah sepoys (a rascally corps), and cut off the two officers who commanded them. One was Captain Thomas, whom you know. Four battalions of the brigade sepoys are now in pursuit of them, but they will not stand any engagement and have neither camp equipage, nor even clothes, to retard their flight. Yet I hope we shall yet make an example of some of them, as they are shut in by rivers which they cannot pass when closely pursued.

"The history of the people is curious. They inhabit or rather possess the country lying south of the hills of Thibet, from Cabul to China. They go mostly naked; they have neither towns, houses nor families; but rove continuously from place to place, recruiting their number with the healthiest children they can steal in the country through which they pass. Thus they are the stoutest and most active men of India. Many are merchants. They are all pilgrims, and held by all castes of Gentoos in great veneration. This infatuation prevents our obtaining any intelligence of their motions, and aid from the country against them, notwithstanding very rigid orders which have been published for these purposes, in so much that they often appear in the heart of the province as if they dropped from heaven. They are hardy, bold and enthusiastic to a degree surpassing credit. Such are the sanyasis, the gypsies of Hindustan.

"We dissolved all the Perganah sepoys and fixed stations of the brigade sepoys on our frontiers, who are to be employed only in the defence of the provinces, and to be relieved every three months. This, I hope, will secure the peace of the country against future irruptions, and as they are no longer to be

employed in the collections, the people will be rid of the oppressions of our own plunderers."

The following extracts from the Board's correspondence with the officials of the Dacca Division are also worth reprinting at length.

No. 66 of 8th November 1784.—"I have taken every precaution to prevent Mujnooshaw's molesting any of the parganas to the eastward of this division, having stationed a complete company of the Sebandy corps at Mustanagar, which is a little to the north-east of Sherpur and which must be his route should his intention lead him to this district. In the event of Mr. Champion's application to me for sepoys, I shall supply them and afford him every assistance, etc., etc."

No. 19 of 18th January 1790.—"A large body of sanyasis have entered the province under the conduct of Cherag Aly and other Fakirs belonging to Mudgooshaw and Mongur, sanyāsis. They come from a place called Mustunghur in the neighbourhood of Dinajpur and pursued an unfrequented road till their arrival at Jaffarshye belonging to the Momensingh Perganah, where they have erected their standard, and are increasing their force by various emissaries who have been in the province for some time. They have not as yet commenced their depredations, except in plundering some of the houses of the inhabitants of Jaffarshye, who fled at their approach, I wrote to Capt. Mackenzie the moment the intelligence reached me, who has ordered a party which leaves Dacca to-morrow morning under the command of a European officer. Previous to delivering over charge to Mr. Butler it was my intention to set off for Belluah to-morrow, but I now await his lordship's order."

No. 15a of 4th July 1782.—(Vakeels on the part of the zamindars of parganas Mymensingh, Alapsing and Sherpur): "Our zemindars are quite desolated for the extortions of the Sanyasis and other Mehergins, for which 100 sepoys were previously ordered to be sent from Jehangirnagore, but the chief did not attend to the orders, and Mr. Lodge, who was directed to proceed to the mofussil, having taken his residence at Jessore, has not yet gone into our parganas and in consequence the sanyasis have become very much disturbing, the ryots daily quitting their habitations to the great loss of public revenue. Rooder Chand Choudhury of Mymensingh, having gone to the cutcherry of Jaffarsing to look after the collection, was attacked by Bibhootgneer and other sanyasis, who wanted to stab him with a cutter, but were prevented by the

interposition of a number of people he had assembled. Many others of the zemindars have left their homes to avoid them. It was formerly the custom to have sepoys stationed in our parganas to protect the inhabitants, but since the mehal has been huzzoory there have been none: wherefore we request you will appoint a Captain and 200 men with ammunition to prevent such disturbances in future.

"Nothing but a strong military force residing here constantly will prevent the sanyasis committing acts of violence, and when this force should at any period be withdrawn, they will adopt measures to enforce payment of what they deem themselves mostly entitled to. They have hitherto resided for many years in these parganas upon the footing of money-lenders and maintain themselves upon the interest from their several capitals, which they have from time to time advanced to the zemindars to make up the deficiency of their revenue kists to Government.

From Henry Lodge to Board :—"60 of the sepoys commanded by the jemadar have had a skirmish with Shaw Mudginoo at Chatterkaith, about 8 or 10 acres from Junatpur towards the Ran Bowahl Pargana. Mudginoo, after having had 25 or 30 of his men shot dead and double the number or thereabout wounded, fled into the jungles; a pursuit would have been imprudent as the sepoys had expended their ammunition. Indeed, the jungles are so immensely thick and of such an extent that there was little probability of the sepoys coming up with Mudginoo, who had the advantage of having a bazar with him, whilst I was under the necessity of supplying the sepoys with rice, etc. I have still hopes of apprehending the notorious robber, and request your permission to employ 100 burkandazes for the space of two months. One sepoy was killed and four others much wounded in the action."

From the above and other extracts it will appear that the sanyāsis like the Kashmir merchants of to-day got the poor ryots into their hands by loans of money at ruinous rates of interest, direct and indirect: but they did not confine their dealings to the ryots; they lent also to the zamindars and, when their clients could not pay, they banded together, plundered their houses and sold their children into slavery. They carried off zamindars and their agents on boats until they leased whole villages or paid their demands. Later on they developed into brigands, pure and simple, and attacked the zamindars in their own cutcherries, plundering the treasuries and burning the homesteads.

This state of affairs was largely due to the famine of 1770, which crippled the zamindars. The Collectors were so few and so far away that the complaints which the sanyāsis took care should not come in too easily or too freely were long in bringing about strong action. The sanyasis under Shaw Mudginoo fortified places in the Madhupur Jungle and at Jamālpur (then called Sanyāsiganj) in 1781, but it was not until 1782 that Mr. Henry Lodge with a body of soldiers camped at Baiganbāri with a view to checking their depredations. Not till 1784 could he raise sufficient reinforcements to take the field, and after a petty battle the two chief leaders, Shaw Mudginoo and Shaw Majrad, left the district. The cantonments were now permanently established at Jamālpur, where they remained till after the Mutiny. There was a similar outpost at Sherpur on the opposite side of the Brahmaputra, which was then 7 or 8 miles broad in the rains.

In 1786 Mudginoo returned to ravage Sherpur, Alapsingh and Mymensingh Parganas, and Sir Patrick Balfour of the 4th regiment of sepoys was ordered by the Chief of Dacca to send a company to help Lodge at Jamālpur. In spite of this the sanyāsis were strong enough to hold some Sherpur zamindars to ransom, and Elliot, the Commissioner, was balked in an attempt to arrest the leader Donaglin by a display of force. He had to resort to stratagem by setting up one leader against the other, and it was not until the establishment of the separate district of Mymensingh under Wroughton as Collector made itself felt, that the trouble quieted down.

In 1791 there were fresh disturbances of the peace, due to the Buxar burkandāzes of the Sherpur zamindars carrying off the 9 annas proprietor and looting his cutchery. Mr. Bayard (Collector) sent sepoys, who rescued the landlord from the Korāibāri Hills and arrested Hirji, the leader. The Korāibāri zamindars were quarrelling with Sherpur about their respective boundaries, and they joined with the remnants of Hirji's band, again looted the Sherpur cutcherry with 300 armed men and carried off the 7 annas landlord. Bayard could not effect a rescue this time, and the matter went up to the Governor-General in Council, who succeeded in compelling the release of the landlord by the Rāja of Korāibāri.

In 1807 a separate Magistrate's court was established at Kaliganj-Sherpur to check the unruliness on the borders. In 1812 a Gāro Safati tried to make an independent principality at the foot of the hills in Susung. He met the Collector at

Mymensingh, and Le Gros recommended his recognition by Government, but the Board rejected it.

In 1823 the Rungpur Light Infantry was stationed at Jamālpur and had to deal with a revolt of the tenants of Sherpur under one Tipu Garo, which was due to the oppressions of the zamindars. Tipu was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for life.

The Mutiny hardly touched Mymensingh at all. The Magistrate made preparations to defend Mymensingh against a small body of 50 armed rebels, but they went past in the direction of Jamālpur without offering fight.

Archæology. The ruins of an old mud fort are still visible at Garh Jaripa, 8 miles north-west of Sherpur. It covers about 1,100 acres and was encompassed by seven successive walls, each 45 feet high and 75 feet broad with a moat between each pair and outside the seventh. The sites of the four gates are still locally identified, as the Kām Darāj on the east, Pāndidarāj on the west, the Sāmsērdarāj or reception gate on the south and the Khirki darāj (private gate) on the north. There was a boat-shaped island in a lake outside the water gate called by some Kosha and by others Dinga, which was used as a pleasure garden. This lake, as well as several ponds within the fort, were filled up during the earthquake of 1897. A Koch temple stood near the Khirki gate. It was converted into a mosque, but a fair in honour of Dalip's mother is still held here every *Baishak*. The fort was built as a protection against Gāros by Dalip Samanta, but the Muhammadans took possession about 1370. The tombstone of their leader, Majlis Shāh Humāyun, with an inscription in Tughra Arabic, was sent to the Museum of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, in 1871, by the late Babu Har Chandra Chaudhuri of Sherpur. The lands within the inner wall were re-leased as valid *lākhirāj* in 1835, and now belong to Rai Rādha Ballabh Chaudhuri Bahadur.

The big mosque at Atia, Tangāil, was built in 1609 by Sayed Khān Pani in honour of the great Pīr Ali Shāhenshah Bābā Kashmīri. The inscription on the tomb shows that the saint died in 1507. There is another old mosque in the Bengali style, which, according to local tradition, was built by Ghyās-uddin Azam Shāh. A ruined brick tomb in front of this mosque is pointed out as the burial place of this Sultan.

The village of Agārasindur on the Brāhmaputrā river opposite Kāorāid contains an ornamental mosque with a large dome supported by four hexagonal buttresses. It has been cracked in places and is overgrown with jungle. There is a stone slab

over the doorway with an inscription dated 1640. Close by are the remains of the fort where, as described in the history of Hazrādi pargana, Isā Khān was besieged by Mān Singh.

The Dargāh of Shāh Kamal at Durmut.—Mr. Donough, Subdivisional Officer, Jamālpur, translated a Bengali pamphlet which gives Shāh Kamal's date as 1503, A.D. He came from Multān, where he saved the place from the encroachment of the river by forcing the devils to give up their spades. The same Shāh Kamal is associated with the Dargāh just across the Gāro Hill border, where both Hindus and Mahammadans do *pūja*. A procession is formed once a year to wash his *chhorā*, or knife, upon which only his descendants may look without harm.

The temple of Lakshmi Narāyan at Kishorganj, consisting of 21 pinnacled structures, together with a Jaltāngi (summer house), Rāsbāri, Durgāh Mandir, Sib Mandir and other smaller buildings was erected in 1770, A.D., by one Nanda Kishore Prāmānik, who rose to affluence in the flourishing days of the muslin industry. It covered an area of 9,000 square feet and contained two inscriptions in Sanskrit, but everything except the Jaltāngi was destroyed in the earthquake of 1897. The four tanks connected with it, including one 265 yards by 142 yards, were excavated by local labourers, at the cost of their food only, during the great famine of 1769, A.D.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

Census results.

THE population of Mymensingh at the last census in 1911 was 4,526,422, giving a density of 724 to the square mile. In Dacca it is 1,066, in Tippera 972, Faridpur 824, Noakhāli 792, Pābna 772, the 24-Parganas 502 and Midnapore 544. Parts of Tangāil and Kishorganj are as thickly populated as any thāna of Dacca except Bikrampur, but the jungly stretches in the Madhupur jungle, Fulpur and Durgāpur thānas and the wide *hāors* or marshes in the river area to the east take off greatly from the average figures. While Nandāil, Katiādi and all the thānas of the Tangail subdivision except Gopālpur and Sarisabāri have a density of over 1,000, Gafargāon falls to 428 and Durgāpur to 333.

The percentage of increase between 1901 and 1911 was 15·53 and between 1891 and 1901 12·75. No figures before 1891 are reliable. The first census in 1872 gave the population as 2,354,794. The increase is well distributed, being greatest in the Sadar subdivision and in Netrokona thāna. The low percentage of increase in the Nāgarpur and Tangāil thānas is attributed to a cholera outbreak in 1905 and to the prevalence of malaria. In Sarisābāri thāna the cutting of the Jamuna has caused the figures to remain stationary.

There are a large number of up-country coolies and servants in the district, who come for the cold weather and the jute season and return every year. Many of them have brought their families and are now domiciled. Practically all sweepers, pālki-bearers and other non-agricultural menials have come from other districts either in this or the previous generation. The total immigrants are shown in the census as 161,395, and this number is nearly counterbalanced by the 156,993 persons enumerated in other districts who gave their birth-place as Mymensingh. The latter are chiefly cultivators who have gone from Tangāil and Jamālpur to settle in the Goalpāra *chars* of the Brāhmaputra. Males exceed females by 152,784, which probably means that emigrants for the most part take their families with them, whereas the immigrants leave theirs behind. The children under 11 number 1,522,569. Of the

remaining population 74 per cent. of the Hindus are married or widowed, and 78 per cent. of the Muhammadans. Among the Hindus 6,256 children under 11 are married and 16,883 among the Muhammadans. There are 109 widows under five years of age.

The Muhammadans form nearly three-quarters of the whole population. In Dacca the proportion is less than half and only Bäkarganj and Chittagong of the Bengal districts, compare in this respect with Mymensingh. Muhammadans.

In the census tables Musalmāns are divided into 55 castes, but they are not so much castes as social divisions. Apart from Sheikhs under which designation 31,922,986, or 93 per cent. of the whole are enrolled, only Nāgarchies, Nikāries, Pāthāns, Kulus, Māhifarashs, Jolāhās (commonly known as Kārigars), Khāns, Dāis, Bediyas appear in any appreciable number.

The Māhifarash caste are fishermen and the Nikāries deal in fish. Ordinarily Muhammadans are not allowed to live by selling fish or milk, and all the fishermen, goālas, dhobies, barbers and most of the artisans are Hindus. The Kulus are the Telis or oil workers of the Muhammadans and the Jolāhās, of which there are some 2,400 in the district, are weavers. The Dāis, though not numerous, are sufficiently scattered to supply midwives to the whole community. Near Kendua there is a particular caste called Gāins who trade as pedlars, chiefly by boat, and are supposed to come from Persia originally.

The inhabitants of Kendua mauza, some 3 miles from the thāna of that name, are called Baigars, Baijees or Samājies. They own the whole village as tenants, but the profession of all the daughters without exception is dancing, singing and prostitution, whereas the men engage in cultivation and marry women from other villages, who indulge in none of the habits of their sisters-in-law, though occupying a separate portion of the same homestead. Some families are quite well off and have quite substantial *bāris*. The first Samājies are said to have been settled at Kendua by the Haibatnagar zamindārs. They have been living there as Muhammadans for over 300 years and in the Thāk the village is described as a Chāfi-Bādshāhi Datta Lākherāj.

The other so-called castes are really surnames and only in some cases show the origin of the family. The Pāthāns and Khāns are in theory descendants of the Afghāns or other up-country followers of the Delhi generals, who fought in Bengal before the English rule. As a matter of fact the title

Khān has been adopted by many of the more recent converts from other religions. Saiyads are nominally the descendants of the Prophet.

Sheikh merely means Sardār or leader, and covers the vast majority of the Muhammadan cultivators whether descended from Hindu converts or from the original conquerors of Bengal.

Mr. J. P. Wise in his notes on the Muhammadans of Bengal says that until the census of 1872 it was not known that Muhammadans predominated in Eastern Bengal and that most of the conversions date from the reign of Jalāluddīn (1414 to 1430) who was the only real persecutor of the Hindus. He attributes many of the conversions to a desire to avoid punishment for murder or caste offences, and a religion which proclaimed all men to be equal must have considerable fascination for the lower caste of Hindus. Present day Muhammadans repudiate this idea, and point out that many of the best Hindu families have Muhammadan branches. Isā Khān, the premier nobleman of Bengal, and Jalāluddin himself were the sons of Brāhmans, and the Susung family at one time professed the Muhammadan faith. Setting aside differences in dress and the way of wearing the hair, it is impossible to distinguish between Muhammadans and Hindus by physique, complexion or type of features, but the extent to which Hindu ceremonies survive among the more ignorant Muhammadans has perhaps been exaggerated by those who ascribe the majority of the conversions to force or worldly motives.

Strictly speaking, only Shias observe the Muharram, but many Sunnis and Hindus take part in the holiday and enjoy the noise, just as Muhammadans join in the Dūrgā Pūja procession and the Manasā Pūja boat races.

The Fateha ceremony of the Muhammadans is quite their own, but observers have confused it with the Srādha ceremony of the Hindus, and Muhammadans do sometimes give a feast on the fortieth day from their relations' death. The practice of observing the sixth day from a child's birth and the seventh month of pregnancy by giving presents has been imitated from the Hindus even by Muhammadans whose homes are in other provinces. If at one time it was at all common for Muhammadans to wash their pots and matresses on Lakshmi Pūja day and to put on clean clothes after the Dūrga Pūja, the practice has died out since the partition. On the other hand Hindus sometimes make offerings at the mosque after winning a case or when their cows first give milk.

The habit of joining the Dol Jātra or "Holi" festival is entirely going out. Superstitions like not setting out on a journey when a lizard falls from the roof are probably common to all religions.

Circumcision is not practised generally by the Muhammadans of Netrakona and Iswarganj.

Coming to sects as opposed to castes, all the Muhammadans of Mymensingh are Sunnis. Though the Nawābs of Dacca were Shias from 1702 to 1843, it was never recognised as the religion of the ruling class, and the only trace it has left in this district is the observance of the Muharram. J. P. Wise divides the Sunnis of his day into four subsects, Sabīqui, Farāzi, Tāaiyāni and Rafiyadain, The last are chiefly weavers and hide merchants in the Tangāil subdivision. They are a Puritan sect, very particular about keeping their women in *parda* and they profess to look down upon the other Sunnis and to be more particular about truthfulness and prayer. They avoid marriage with other sects.

The Tāaiyāni school following Kerāmat Ali never gained ground in this district, though according to Wise they comprised the majority of Dacca cultivators in his time.

The Farāzi sect were founded by Hāzi Shariatullah of Farīdpur after a 20 years' pilgrimage to Mecca. He taught non-observance of Friday prayers and of the two great Ids and Muharram on the ground that India was not a Moslem country. He required from all *Tauba*, or penitence for past sins, and discouraged music at marriages and offerings to the dead.

His son Dudhu Miya born in 1819 organised Bengal into circles and established a Khalifa in each. In defence of his adherents he came to blows with the zamindārs and collected *lathials*. He was committed to the Sessions on a charge of murder in 1841, but was acquitted. Later he pillaged an indigo factory and 62 of his followers were convicted, but acquitted on appeal to the Sadar Adalat.

At one time he had many followers in Mymensingh, but they are now chiefly confined to the Jamuna *deara*.

The term Sabīqui referred to those undoubted converts from Hinduism, who still observed many Hindu customs and rituals. Most of them now belong to the Hānifi school and are discouraged by their Maulvis and Mollahs from attending Hindu festivals even as spectators.

A more usual classification of the Muhammadans divides them into four sects (1) Hānifis. (2) Shafāis, (3) Mālikis and (4) Hānbālis, but only the Hānifis occur in this district to any

extent. These four subsects follow the instructions of the four greater Imāms, whereas the Wahābis, a later development, of whom the Farāzis and the Rafiyadains are the best known, only recognise the precepts of the Prophet as handed on by his companions.

There is very little real Pīr or Saint worship in the district, though the tombs of prominent Fakīrs are regarded as holy places. Miskim Shāh is a favourate Pīr in Gafargāon thāna, and his tomb at Mukhi near Moshākhāli is the scene of an annual fair. The shrine of Pīr Shāhenshah at Atia is a place of pilgrimage and that of Shāh Afzal Māmud in Serājganj is reverenced by the Muhammadans and Marwāries of the northern thānas of the Tangāil subdivision. In Jamālpur Durmut and Madārganj there are shrines associated with the name of Shāh Kamal.

Madan Pīr has a famous shrine in Netrakona subdivision, and birds are popularly supposed not to fly over this shrine. In Joānshāhi Kutub Sāhib is all powerful, and round Astagrām no cultivator dare yoke cows to a plough. His mosque at Astagrām is richly supported by votive offerings, and has been taken over by the Archæological Department.

Mounds of earth with five crests on them, representing the "Pānch Pīr" are ubiquitous especially under big baniyan trees. Offerings of milk are made by persons registering vows. The Pīr Gāzi Miya protects his worshippers in the Madhupur Jungle from tigers. Sailors pray to Khāwajeh Khizir and Pīr Badar, but there are not many professional mānjhis indigenous to the district.

Except the very aged and infirm all Muhammadans observe the Ramjān rigorously at the cost of considerable injury to their health and work. This fasting in the case of growing boys at school may partially account for the backwardness of Muhammadans in the public services. Other festivals generally observed are the Shababarāt and the two Ids. The isolated group of three *pukka* steps to be seen in the open fields all over the country are used by the leaders of the prayers only on the Iduzzoha. All respectable cultivators say their prayers five times a day throughout the year and attend the local mosque at midday on Friday.

Hindus. All the well-known castes of Hindus are represented in the district. Most of the zamindārs belong to Brāhman or Kayastha families, and the villages in Netrakona and Kishorganj containing the ancient seats of Hindu bhadralok families are extremely numerous. Ballāl Sen's elaborate organisation of Kulinism did not leave its mark on Mymensingh as it did

on Dacca, but the portion of the district west of the Brahmaputra has several families who trace descent from the five Vedic Brāhmans who were imported by Adisur in 732 A. D. in the hope of purifying the religion of the earlier Brāhman settlers. The families of so-called Kulin Kayasthas who accompanied the original Kulins from Kanauj are strongly represented in the Ghoses, Boses, Guhas, Mitras and Dattas of the Tangāil subdivision.

Most people supposed until recently that the custom of *Satī* had died out, but there was a case at Nandāil in 1913, the widow of a settlement muharrir who died of cholera being the victim. Since then several cases have been reported in the Calcutta papers.

Of the lower castes Binds number 1,580, Chamārs 6,800, Dālus 4,800, Dhobās 17,000, Doms 1,500, Dosāds 1,800, Gandhabaniks 5,600, Goālas 25,600, Jogis 46,000, Kāhārs 5,000, Kaibarttas 130,000, Kāmārs 13,000, Kāpālies 16,000, Kumhars 22,000, Māls 21,000, Malis 5,900, Malos 38,900, Muchis 26,600, Namasudras 28,000, Pātnis 24,000, Rājbansies 23,000, Shāhas 56,000, Sudras 17,000, Sutradhars 32,000, Tantis 12,000, Telīs 13,000, Tiyars 22,700. Of these the Rājbansis are the most distinctive. Even in Buchanan's time they assumed the sacred thread and claimed to be Kshattriyas who had fled from Orissa to escape the violence of the deity Parasurām. It is more probable that like the Koches they were an aboriginal tribe on the frontier of Bengal and Assam, and that their claim to a higher sounding name was based on as fictitious historical grounds as that of the Namasudras or Chandāls, and is merely the result of a laudable ambition to raise themselves in the social scale. At various times the Hadis, Koches, Malos, Kumhars and Pods have harassed the census and settlement authorities to conceal their legitimate names.

The Rājbansis are a particularly harmless and peaceable people and their submissiveness and industry make them excellent tenants.

One peculiarity of the district is the number of representatives of aboriginal tribes. Gāros number 38,000, Hadis 26,000, Hājangs 25,000, and Koches 32,000. They inhabit the Susung and Sherpur villages along the foot of the Garo Hills and are the pioneers of cultivation in the Madhupur Jungle. The Garos and Koches do not use the plough, but only the kodāli and they still prefer to cultivate virgin ground. After cutting the jungle and cultivating two or three crops they make way for a Muhammadan family and start over again. The Garos and the Aboriginal tribes.

Hajangs are noted for their simplicity, and the impression their straightforwardness and truthfulness has made on the Hindu and Muhammadan officers, who have worked among them, is a striking commentary on the extent to which these people recognise the defects of their own co-religionists in this respect.

The Gāros are short but strongly built. The women wear short petticoats of blue and red home woven stuff instead of the *sari*, and the men hardly anything at all. They retain some, though not all, of the primitive customs of their cousins in the hills. They eat anything including dogs, but strangely enough refuse to touch milk, though close contact with other races is gradually removing this prejudice. Bidhāns usually consisting of fowls are offered to the household Gods or Dēos on the advice of the priest or "Densis" at marriages and deaths. They all speak some Bengali, and the Nāmdāli Gāros hardly understand the language of the hills. Some of them observe *Sradha* ceremonies.

All property descends through the female line with the result that the husband of the youngest daughter is the *de facto* owner of the family land and property. If his wife dies he is expected to marry another woman of the same motherhood or "Machang." If the "Nokma," as the holder of the life interest is called, dies before his wife, a "Nokram," who is by preference a son of his sister, is appointed, so that the control of the family property may not pass from the "Machang" of the deceased husband. The "Nokram" elect marries his uncle's daughters and the widow also when the uncle dies.

For further information about the Gāros, Major Playfair's monograph is to be found in all Collectorate libraries. On the evidence of language and their own traditions it is believed that they belonged to the Thibeto-Burman group of tribes speaking the Bodo language. They are closely connected with the Kacharies of Danipur with whom they emigrated from Thibet to Assam about 400 A.D. Fights with the Assamese caused the Gāros to retreat across the Brahmaputra and after that they had little association with their late countrymen.

The Koches of Mymensingh are more closely related to the Gāros than to the Assamese caste of the same name, who are virtually Hinduized. It is probable that the Koches inhabited the whole of the Gāro Hills before the Gāro invasion and possibly they represent an earlier wave of immigration of the same Bodos.

The Hājangs are Hindus and do not wear any distinctive dress, but in features they are hardly to be distinguished from

the Gāros. They are said to have been imported to the Durgapur thāna by the Susung Rājas for Kheddah operations for which the local Bengalis were not fitted.

The Hadis are often bad characters and get on badly with their landlords. Like all aboriginal castes they are great drunkards, and this vice is gradually decimating the vigorous Mundāis, who are still common in the Madhupur Jungle.

There are Christian missions belonging to the Australian Baptists at Mymensingh, Tangāil and Durgapur and of the Oxford Mission at Haluāghāt. They are fairly successful with the Gāros and their schools are well attended. A large school for girl foundlings is maintained at Mymensingh.

Language.

The Bengali spoken in Tangāil and the west of the district is fairly pure. In the eastern thānas it has assimilated some of the corrupt intonation of the Sylhet dialect, but the words used are much the same as elsewhere. Even in Jamālpur there are traces of Assamese idiom, *e.g.* the constant use of the word *lagē* or *lagibē*. Instead of the infinite in *bo* the verbal in *on* or *an* is used, "*Jaon lage*," you must go. The abbreviation of verbal suffixes is stereotyped and as a rule intelligible. Many people use a future ending in *mu*, *ba*, *bo* instead of *bo*, *be*, *be*, *e.g.* *jamu*, I will go, and another peculiarity is the suffix *ga* added to the past tense *gēchhē* to give emphasis. S is often pronounced as h and the aspirate is dropped in words like Hanumān.

Character of the people.

The character of the Muhammadan masses is full of inconsistencies. They have for long been described as untruthful and dishonest, and it is well known that in the Courts it is thought to be the duty of a witness to say what suits his side. The man who speaks the truth against, not so much his own interest, as what may possibly turn out to be his interest, looks upon himself as a fool. Litigation and business, however, are regarded as games to which the rules of love and war apply. Among themselves the villagers know perfectly well when one of their members is lying and an investigating officer can usually get the benefit of their knowledge in an informal inquiry. There is always, however, an inherent suspiciousness to overcome, which seems to be more than the normal conservatism of the peasant. Even when a new scheme like co-operative banks is being initiated for their benefit, they are not satisfied with the word of one officer, they have to consult everybody within reach including his typewriter and chaprasi.

Inside their own communities they respect each other's rights and property, and have very few quarrels considering

the close contact entailed by the conditions of life in villages of which only a small portion is unflooded in the rains.

Village quarrels are usually due to factions led by ambitious and unscrupulous *māthbars*. When the *māthbars* are honest and tactful they can do what they like with the common herd. Often the poorest seem the most contented and happy and, if asked why they did not resist some aggression or take some step to ameliorate their lot, they give the invariable answer "Garib Admī," "I can neither read nor write, I must do what other people tell me."

They are easily excited and when they lose their heads take to breaking heads and shedding blood for trivial causes. They follow each other like sheep and the preachings of outside Mullās and Maulvies are at the bottom of most of the discontent that exists. Ordinarily the natives of the district are patient and humble to a degree. The looting of the Bazars at Dewānganj and Bakshiganj at the time of the Swadeshi agitation in 1907 is said to have marked the release of the Muhammadans from their old fear of the Hindus and to have given the first impulse to the clamour for education and a share in Government offices. This may have been the case in Dewānganj, where the ryots were deeply in debt and were only too glad to take advantage of the rumour that Government had authorised the pillage of Hindus to punish their Mahājans. Elsewhere there are many villages which successfully resisted their landlords long before 1908. That more did not follow their example is due not so much to timidity, as to an inability to combine and the fragility of their pride. It is not a severe beating but a beating with shoes, not starvation but the disgrace of forceable detention, sometimes even the mere threat of refusing a stool in the cutcherry, when he comes to pay his rent, which cows the Muhammadan cultivator into submission. The ryots' statement is often true that they have been forced into the execution of kabuliyats, but the force required is so slight from the English point of view that in the hands of a clever landlord or nāib it never lays him open to legal proceedings.

Generally their submissiveness was more apparent than real. They were not interfered with and as long as their misfortunes were due to natural causes or to the despotism of "Dastur," they did not complain. But few people in the world can have so little idea of public duty and sense of obligation to the State. There would be very little submissiveness if their carts and animals and youth were impressed for war purposes

If a rate of rent has ruled for a long time they can be absolutely pig-headed and unreasoning in refusing to listen to all reasons why it should be enhanced and in Alapsingh, because their story of a 36-inch *guj* was not listened to, they seriously hampered the progress of settlement by refusing to attend the *bujharat* of their own fields.

The ordinary ploughman or reaper shows no interest at all in strangers riding across his fields. It does not strike him that they may be there for his benefit, and in his turn he does not expect to be interfered with. He will not lay down his tools for two minutes to help a visitor across a ford or a broken bridge, and rather than show him 10 yards on his way he will say that he does not know the name of the next village. This may be due to laziness chiefly, but it illustrates their attitude of aloofness. At the same time there is a tradition of help from the Sarkār in old fashioned villages. A sudden intrusion into the homestead may be met by cries of "Dohāi Company" and sometimes "Dohāi Mahārāni." Even the better class house-holders seem to think that the touring officer is above the law and can give justice more summary or more equitable than the courts.

The people bear no grudge against the Courts who decide against their claims, recognising that it is the falsehoods of the opposite party and not the bias of the Courts that has caused their downfall.

One of their worst traits is their selfishness as regards public cow-paths and grazing grounds. No ryot will hesitate to fence in a new *bāri* even if it means blocking the approach for carts to several other homesteads and preventing the access to water of all the village cattle. No one who can get a *patta* for new land from a selfish landlord will stop to think that it means a reduction of the already perilously small grazing ground of the community. To the sufferings of dumb animals they are absolutely callous. Ten of them will ride on one *tikkagari* over the worst road and no sore can prevent their bullocks being yoked. The most diseased dog is left to starve or die of itself. On the other hand they bear pain themselves with considerable fortitude, and it is marvellous from what bad operations they can survive.

Their hospitality is beyond reproach and even the poorest householder will offer tobacco, *pān*, or a cocoanut or milk. Often the largest hut is the baithakkhāna, in which strangers can sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

Vital Statistics.

DURING the last six years the death-rate in Mymensingh has varied from 20 to 22 per thousand and the birth-rate from 30 to 33. The birth-rate does not compare favourably with that of the other districts of the Dacca Division and still less with that returned by Rājshāhi, Nadia, Murshidabād and Noākhāli, where it exceeds 40 per mille. On the other hand the death-rate is much lower than in other districts: in Tippera the figure is about the same (21·37), but in Dacca it is 25·65 and in Farīdpur and most of the other districts of Bengal it varies from 30 to 38. In the last century the Mymensingh death-rate was never reported as more than 20 per thousand, but comparison with old returns is vitiated by the imperfect and varying methods of registration. As regards mortality from different diseases, the Mymensingh percentage of deaths compares favourably with other districts, except perhaps in the case of small-pox: for fever it is only 14·10 as opposed to 17·96 in Dacca and 27 per mille in most of the districts of the Rajshāhi Division. Moreover many of the deaths which are attributed by the chaukidars to malaria are really cases of a low form of typhoid or pneumonia, which are liable to occur in any climate.

In spite, therefore, of the evil reputation which clings to Tangāil, Mymensingh must be considered one of the healthiest districts in the plains of India. Touring officers and others living in the Madhupur jungle, or camping near the foot of the Gāro Hills after the proper touring season, are liable to contract a particularly malignant type of fever, whose first symptoms are vomiting and severe pains in the limbs. Elsewhere attacks of fever are usually relapses brought on by wet weather in the cold season or sudden changes of temperature during the rains. The spleen index is low. Serious cases of malaria will nearly always be found to have been imported from other districts. The non-epidemic diseases most commonly met with are intestinal, respiratory and integumentary.

Cholera occurs every cold weather in an endemic form, but, as the Civil Surgeon wrote in 1874, it does not prevail extensively or continue long in any one place nor is it usually virulent in type. Even at that time its periodical appearance in November was attributed to three causes, the eating of new *āman* rice, the storing of decayed fish which were caught in too great numbers during the subsidence of the floods to be consumed at once, and the contamination of every *khāl* and pool of water by steeping jute. In Tangāil serious epidemics of cholera are apt to break out in the rains as in 1900, 1905 and in 1915, and the difficulty of disposing of the dead, when all the country is under water, makes recurrence inevitable. In other parts of the district outbreaks may occur in April and May as well as at the beginning of the cold weather, but they are so localised that it would appear that cholera could be stopped entirely, if the people had even the most elementary ideas of sanitation and prevention. Cholera corpses are burnt on the edges of *bils* and dried up rivulets in all parts of Sadar, Kishorganj, and Netrakona, and the filthy pillows and bedding are never burnt along with the corpse, but left with the *kalsi* and half-burnt bamboos, a prominent object near many of the public ferries and roads. Cholera.

In the old days small-pox was a serious plague and the practice of inoculation was responsible for many deaths. Vaccination has at last forced its way into general tolerance and serious outbreaks are not common.

In the 1872 Administration Report an outbreak of *Kālā-Azār* or *Kālā-Deo* was reported from the Sherpur Thānā. It is described as a remittent fever, not infectious but usually fatal.

In 1910 over 20 cases of *bēri bēri* were reported from houses near Mohanganj Bazār in the Netrokona subdivision, but the disease was eventually put down as epidemic dropsy and there have been no further reports. Leprosy is perhaps more common than in other districts of Eastern Bengal, and occasional cases of elephantiasis are met with.

As the hospital returns for outdoor patients in every thana will show, the most common complaints are affections of the skin. At Bhairab dispensary in 1898. 9,568 persons were treated for skin diseases as opposed to 591 for rheumatism and kindred diseases, and 360 for malaria, and 148 for dysentery. At Jamālpur and Kendua skin diseases were also responsible for nearly one-third the total number of patients. Up-country ferrymen and Bengali fishermen seem specially liable, and there

is hardly one Muhammadan out of three in the water-logged areas who is not troubled by one form or other of skin ailment.

Goitre.

In Jamālpur subdivision and in Sadar along the foot of the hills goitre is extremely common. It hardly occurs in the south or east of the district and it is not impossible that drinking water eventually derived from hill streams has something to do with this disease. It has been attributed to drinking the stagnant water of bad ring wells, but such wells are not confined to the Jamālpur subdivision and the sandy foundations of these wells must and does provide far purer and cooler water than the rivers and tanks, which are the chief source of supply in the south of Tangāil and in Kishorganj.

Water-supply

Ring wells can be sunk to a depth of 15 or 20 feet for Rs. 18 and the cost is even less if the soil is hard, as in that case the well is merely a hole in the earth with two or three rings at the top to prevent the edges breaking in. It is strange that the use of these wells is on the whole restricted to such local limits. In many villages in Jamālpur every *bāri* has its own, and there are sufficient in the Madhupur jungle and the less sandy *thānās* to show that, if the potters had more enterprise, these wells could be successfully spread over many other areas. The *pukka* wells which the District Board puts up in favoured places cost Rs. 600 or more, and are not always successful in providing good drinking water at once. Few of the rivers and *khāls*, on which the people of the central *thānās* depend, have sufficient current to be safe in the winter months, and few of the tanks, which in Netrokona and Tangāil are the chief source of supply, are sufficiently preserved. Fishing, bathing and the washing of clothes goes on in all.

Apart from the *bils*, which occur in all the subdivisions at frequent intervals, when once the floods subside, the district as a whole dries up with wonderful speed. To the absence of any water-logged areas in the sense that Jessore and Rājshāhi are water-logged, and the sandy nature of much of its soil, the district owes its comparative immunity from malaria. But the rapidity with which the streams dry up in the cold weather makes the problem of water-supply more serious, and it is really dysentery and the kindred bowel complaints that cause the greatest drain on the vitality of the people.

In the first 20 years of the District Board great strides were made in the medical facilities of the district. Between 1883 and 1903 the number of dispensaries rose from 15 to 32, the number of beds from 36 to 135, the number of indoor patients from 353 to 2,290 and the number of outdoor patients from

32,418 to 374,065. The same rate of progress has not been maintained since 1903, though the number of outdoor patients treated in 1914 was 549,412. The number of operations has remained practically the same, 12,514 instead of 11,327.

The total income of the dispensaries is now Rs. 86,498, of which about one-third comes from public subscriptions and the rest from Government, the Municipalities and the District Board. On the whole the dispensaries are well distributed throughout the district, but there are many villages 30 miles from any dispensary and it stands to reason that many cases of the more serious diseases never come within their statistics at all. Patients who are seriously ill cannot be carried long distances in narrow cages hung on a bamboo, and all but the very poor have an insuperable objection to becoming in-patients of a hospital. Medical practitioners are to be found in many of the larger villages, but their qualifications are very low, and the better diffusion of properly qualified doctors as well as the systematic improvement of the water-supply are the most crying needs of the district. Dispensaries.

The towns of Mymensingh are not of sufficient importance to merit special attention in this chapter. In 1869 the Civil Surgeon recommended the transfer of the head-quarters of the district to Subarnakhāli or Jamālpur on the ground that a *char* having formed in the Brahmaputra just above their bungalows the officials were always getting ill. The drainage has always been a difficulty as the river bank is very much higher than the general level of the streets, and all the drains run into the *bils* on the south, instead of into the river. When therefore the *bils* are full, there is no drainage at all. On the whole, however, Mymensingh shares with the rest of the district quite a fair reputation for healthiness and its death-rate per mille is only 9·16 as opposed to 20·27 in Jamālpur and 19·37 in Tangāil. Mosquitoes are very bad in the cold weather months, there having been a great change for the worse in this respect during the last five years, but the anopheles is rare. Rāmgopālpur, Jamālpur and Kishorganj are also bad for mosquitoes, but in most mofussil camps during the cold weather, even in the Tangāil subdivision, there is little risk or discomfort in sleeping without a net. Towns.

All the subdivisional head-quarters are now provided with Lady Doctors or Midwives. A new hospital is being built in Mymensingh itself at an estimated cost of over 2 lakhs, which promises to be a model institution for the Province.

CHAPTER V.

AGRICULTURE.

THE Settlement records show that 2,747,000 acres of the district are cultivated, or 4,292 out of 6,300 square miles. The Madhupur jungle takes up about 420 square miles, but of this 126 square miles are *baids* sown with paddy, or *chala* lands sown with jute, mustard, or other crops. Rivers and *bils* account for 732 square miles, homesteads for 395 square miles and roads for 85. The other uncultivated areas are chiefly grass and scrub jungle in the Fulpur, Durgapur and Khāliajurī thanas, which are under water too many months of the year for any crop to grow. Cultivation has increased and is increasing rapidly, with the result that the limit will very soon be reached. In 1872 Reynolds calculated that out of 6,464 miles 230 were river and *bil* and 890 jungle, only 3,562 were cultivated.

Soil. The principal soils to be found in the district are (*i*) the red soil of the Madhupur jungle, which is very rich in iron and lime, but deficient in clay. When dry it is as hard as stone and very porous. (*ii*) The almost-pure sand of the Brahmaputra and Jamuna *chars*. Those that have even the thinnest coating of silt grow excellent jute. (*iii*) The rich clay of the rest of the district, which derives its fertility from decaying vegetation and flood alluvion. This varies not in kind, but only in degree, according to its stiffness, from the comparatively dry areas of Jafarshāhi and Alāpsingh to the huge *haors* in which *boro* paddy is grown. In some parts the clods are so hard that no ploughing will break them up, and the hammer has to be requisitioned. From Kishorganj eastwards, however, one shower is sufficient to change the fields from baked clay into liquid mud.

1,446 square miles, or 34 per cent. of the culturable land of the district, regularly bears two crops, and there are many villages where the best lands give quite good crops of rice, jute, and mustard in one and the same agricultural year.

The climate is on the whole good. The rainfall is probably better distributed than in any part of the tropics. Two or three wet days are the rule rather than the exception even in December, January and February, and in March there are constant showers, especially in the afternoons. April and May often have as many rainy days as June and August, and the bright sun blazing through the exceptionally humid atmosphere affords ideal conditions for the growth of the main crops. A real famine, or even a serious scarcity, is almost impossible over a wide area.

Compared with rice, the staple food crop, and jute, all the other crops of Mymensingh shrink into insignificance. Rice is divided into three main groups according to the season of the year at which it is grown. The most important is *āman* or the winter harvest of paddy which is sown in all the low lands of the district in July and August. Sometimes it is sown broadcast, but more usually it is transplanted from seedling beds called *jālā*, which are prepared on the higher lands of the village banked up with *ails* of earth, so as to retain all the moisture of the earlier showers. As the seedlings need not be transplanted till they are 8 inches or a foot high, the cultivators can wait for the transplantation till the *aus* or jute has been cut and the first heavy rains have enabled the fields to be ploughed up into a foot or more of liquid mud. The plant has an extraordinary power of growth and can shoot up a foot in 24 hours. It is never spoilt by standing in too much water, so long as it can keep pace with the inundation, and it requires no weeding.

The cultivators of this district go in for over 60 varieties of *āman* paddy, being guided in their choice of seeds by the height of the land. For lands on which *āus* or jute have already been harvested, one of the *bhadra māshi* or long stalked quick-growing varieties has to be used. The varieties grown on land which produces *āman* only are classified as *asari*. *Bāwā* paddy is much coarser than the transplanted varieties, and it has the disadvantage of occupying the fields for a full 10 months. On the other hand it requires no labour. Rice.

Transplanted *āman* is called *rowā* and that sown broadcast *bāwā dhān*.

Area in acres under each crop according to Settlement records :—

Jute	555,400
Āman	1,490,700.
Aus	754,500.
Boro	190,600.
Oilseeds	309,700.
Sugarcane	8,405.
Pulses	77,238.

Aman is grown in the sandy villages of the Jamālpur subdivision, on all the level plains of the Sadar and Tangāil and Netrokona subdivisions and in all the *bils* throughout the district which are not in the habit of going more than 6 feet under water in August and September. It is also the only crop in the serpentine strips of level low land, which are to be found throughout the Madhupur jungle and are known as *baid*. It gives a better outturn than *āus*, which the richer people avoid as being indigestible. It is less coarse and more palatable than *boro* paddy which, however, returns a heavier yield.

Aus paddy has also many varieties and is sown at the same time as jute, as soon as the first rains of March and April allow the land to be thoroughly ploughed. *Aus* requires a lower standard of fertility in the soil than jute, so in many parts, where there is not sufficient manure, it is substituted for jute in alternate years. To a great extent the ryot is influenced by the state of his own granary. If he has not enough *āman* to last his family till December he devotes a certain portion of his holding to *āus* to prevent the necessity of buying rice at an outside market between July and December.

Aus is perhaps chiefly grown in the Jamālpur and Tangāil subdivisions. In Kishorganj and Netrakona a larger proportion of jute is grown, and also the fields there are flooded earlier in the year. For this reason in the Kishorganj subdivision *āus* and *āman* are sometimes sown broad cast together, so that if one does not succeed the other does. Under favourable conditions a half crop of *āus* and a three-quarter crop of *āman* are got in this way. The *āus* thus sown is called *bowāli* and ripens a month earlier than the ordinary *āus*.

Boro paddy is grown in *bils*, which are too deep in water in the rains to allow of any crop at all. As soon as a *bil* begins to dry up in November and December, its sides are planted with seedlings grown in September and October on any adjacent dry spot, and the transplanted area is gradully extended till the whole *bil* is filled up. The *bils* dry so rapidly during the cold weather that a lot of irrigation is needed and the process of irrigating and transplanting may go on beyond the end of February. In areas liable to flood as early as April or May, the harvesters stay out in the fields day and night, and some of the crop is always cut before it is ripe. Apart from irrigation and protection from *kālem* and other birds, which often do considerable damage, *boro* paddy involves little labour, as the minimum of ploughing and no weeding is required. The seedling

beds, however, require at least four ploughings and levellings. The seeds are soaked in water for 24 hours and encouraged to germinate before they are thrown on to the plaster of wet earth.

The yield may be as much as 45 maunds an acre. Allowing Re. 1-2 as the cost of each day's ploughing and 8 annas as the cost of one man's labour in weeding, thrashing, etc., the profit of *boro* cultivation per acre is probably about Rs. 65 as opposed to Rs. 45 from *āman* and Rs. 18 from *āus*. On a similar calculation, taking 16 maunds as the outturn and the price Rs. 8 a maund, the profit on jute is about Rs. 66 an acre. **Profits of cultivation.**

Boro paddy is the main crop in all the eastern thanas of the district, Barhatta, Khāliajuri, Badla and Bājitpur. It is extremely common in the lower parts of the Tangāil subdivision and in the deep circular *bils* of the Gafargāon thana, whose hilly basins show that they are really a part of the Madhupur jungle. There is very little *boro* paddy in Jamālpur or Sadar.

Kāon in its early stages may easily be mistaken for paddy. It is often the first crop grown on pure sand in new *chars* of the Brāhmaputra.

Cheena is another millet grown in Dewānganj, Sārisābāri, Tangāil, and Bājitpur. The outturn is not more than 8 maunds an acre. It is a precarious crop which tells heavily on the soil and the outturn is not worth more than Rs. 24 an acre. A little wheat and a little barley are grown in Dewānganj and Sārisābāri thānās and there are a few fields of *arhar* (the pigeon pea) in Sherpur.

The area under jute according to the Settlement statistics was 555,400 acres. These are not the figures for one year, but they agree fairly well with the figures reported by the Director of Agriculture for the year 1914, viz., 587,620. With an average yield of 15 maunds an acre it means that some 620 lakhs come into the district in a good year for jute alone. The plant is usually called *nalia* and the fibre *pāt* or *koshtā* by the villagers. The best jute is grown on the *char* land of the Brāhmaputra and other smaller rivers where a sandy foundation has been enriched by the alluvial deposits of successive floods. The average outturn is not less than 15 maunds an acre. **Jute.**

The higher the land, the better the jute, is a general maxim for this district. In years, when the April rains are above normal, the plants are spoiled by water continually standing on their roots, and the cultivators may plough up the crop and

substitute *dus* paddy. When the plants are 5 or 4 feet high standing water is less harmful and in many parts of the district they are cut when under 2 to 4 feet of water, but except in Tangāil this is the exception and not the rule. In Sadar, Jamālpur and Netrakona the jute can be cut with dry feet and often the difficulty is to find tanks or rivers within reasonable distance for steeping purposes.

The time of cutting depends very much on the market price at well as on the weather. Some fields are cut early in June, but if rain is deficient in July and there is no hurry about transplanting the *aman* crop, or if steeping places are not readily available, then any number of fields are left standing till the end of August. The cultivators take no trouble about the selection of seed, so a small field here and there is always left for this purpose. The retting takes from 8 to 15 days, and the colour and quality of the jute depends very much on the kind of water used. The bundles of jute are arranged like rafts and weighted down with plantain stalks and mud. Then the bark or fibre is separated by hand from the pipe of sap inside, and beaten in the water. It is dried on bamboo rails and the favourite scene for this operation, like the former, is only too commonly the public road and bridges.

The ryots do up their jute into rough bundles according to the amount they wish to sell or can convey to market at one time. Good jute should be 10 feet long and have the colour and glossiness of pale natural silk.

The botanical species most widely grown in this district is the *Corchorus capsularis*. Commercially the varieties are known by place names, *e.g.*, Serājganj, Narāyānganj, Uttar-arja and the only classification is according to quality.

Indigo is not grown at all. Jute began to take its place as early as 1830, but was not seriously cultivated till 1850. The period of the most rapid increase was from 1892 to 1907. It is probable that the limit of cultivation has been reached, and it would be better for the inhabitants if they kept enough area under rice to supply themselves with the whole of their annual consumption. The collapse of prices in 1914 due to the war does not, however, seem to have seriously reduced the area under jute. *Aman* and *boro* paddy, on which the people mainly depend for their food, grow at different seasons, and *dus* is the only alternative to jute in the spring months. If more jute were grown the cattle would suffer from the absence of straw, which is their only fodder during the seasons of flood, and there would be a scarcity of steeping-places.

From April to December almost every field bears its rice or jute crop. In the cold weather there is more variety, and in some parts the land really has a rest. Mustard is perhaps the commonest winter crop in all the higher villages. In the centre and east of the district the *āman* paddy is cut when the soil is too dry and hard for any new crop to be planted before April, and it is chiefly the *āus* and jute lands, which are not low enough for two crops of rice, on which mustard, *til* (*sesamum*), onions, sweet potatoes, peas, radishes and pulses like *māshkalāi* and *khesāri* are grown. *Tissi* (linseed) and the pulses are most common in Tangāil. *Sunn* or hemp is another favourite crop in Jamālpur and the northern parts of Tangāil. It is not grown for the fibre, but either as manure or to feed the cattle. Its brilliant yellow flower mixed with the pale yellow of the mustard and the blue of the *tissi* affords a striking change from the general dullness which marks the Alāpsingh and Kishorganj villages at the same season of the year. — Winter crops.

Sugarcane gives a splendid return, but its cultivation is confined to very small areas. It takes a whole year to grow, and this is why it is not more extensively patronised. The chief centres are Islāmpur, Dewānganj, Kendua, Tangāil, Madhupur in Nandāil, Iswarganj and Hosenpur. Seedlings, 12,000 or more to the acre, are planted in lines 36 inches apart at intervals of 20 inches. The seedlings are taken from cuttings consisting of two joints which have been half buried in a horizontal position in a well watered bed. Plenty of manure is required and at least eight ploughings.

Cotton is only grown in the Madhupur jungle and the outskirts of the Gāro Hills. The cotton of the *simul* tree, which grows everywhere, is not collected.

Tobacco, chillies, and various vegetables are grown round every *bāri* throughout the district, but only in small plots. Cucumbers, pineapples and English potatoes might be more generally cultivated than they are, but they are cheap in all bazārs. A popular and most paying crop in Nandāil and Katiādi and Sārisabāri are the giant radishes which are sold at every *hāt* in December and January. — Vegetables.

Melons are extensively grown by up-country coolies on the sand banks of the Brāhmaputra in January and February. Indian-corn grows very well from April to July, but the Bengali cultivators do not seem to care for it and like tomatoes, peas, beans and other English vegetables it is chiefly grown in Mymensingh for the benefit of the European residents. There is an agricultural farm at Narundi, which stands alone in

trying to oust the Dacca market gardeners in providing cauliflowers and cabbages for the table. Plantain trees are common everywhere, and in most *thānās* every substantial *bāri* has its own *supāri* (betelnut) and cocoanut palms, mango and jack fruit trees. The latter are most prolific and yield an enormous weight of fruit. During the season when the ordinary villager has little else to dispose of, the basket which he carries to the *hāt* on his head will seldom contain more than two of this gigantic fruit. Mangoes do not grow well, being blown unripe from the trees or spoiled by various insect pests.

Pān or betel-vine is grown all over the district in small patches, principally where the villages are old and close together, as in the thickly populated neighbourhoods of Islāmpur, Keshjāni, Nandāil, Purbadhala and Jangalbāri. The young creepers are planted in straight lines and have to be carefully surrounded with walls and roofing of split bamboos and jute sticks to protect them from the sun, the rain, the wind and the cattle. Really good soil is required and the landlords often demand a heavy rent for the *pān baraj*. It takes a year for the plant to reach maturity, but after that the leaves can be plucked all months of the year. Two thousand cuttings go to an acre, and the yield is estimated at 70 lakhs of leaves. With the extension of cultivation thatching grass has also become a valuable crop. All lands left *patit* for two or three years will gradually develop *ulu* (saccharum) shoots and then, if the cattle are kept off, grass suitable for thatching will grow to a height of 5 or 7 feet. Some varieties which are not of much use for roofing make excellent fodder for cattle. The Madhupur jungle grows a valuable grass known as *kāolā*.

The sturdy *jhāo* or tamarisk bushes, which grow on all *chars* soon after they have reformed, are only useful for fodder and fuel. The reeds from which *sitalpati* mats are made grow at the side of the district board road between Kālihati and Ichapur as also here and there in Kishorganj.

Manure. The crops which depend most on manure like tobacco, sugarcane, and chillies, are grown near homesteads, where owing to the thickness of the population and the multitude of cattle and goats natural manure is never wanting. Even jute grows highest and thickest in the homestead plots. In the outside fields artificial manure like oilcake is only applied to *pān* plantations, but cowdung and ashes and aquatic weeds are often distributed in small heaps on fields where jute is going to be sown. In villages where straw is not particularly valuable the rice is cut high and the stalks are burnt some

weeks before the next ploughing is due. In Jamālpur and Tangāil the *sunn* crop is ploughed into the ground as soon as it flowers. This has a very good effect on the outturn of jute.

In Jamālpur cowsheds are built in the open fields at the beginning of the cold weather and changed to a different place two or three times in the season, so that different fields may have the benefit. Generally speaking, however, quite apart from seeking for new manures, the people are very wasteful even with regard to the supplies that are available. Soil from the bed of *khāls* or *bils* is not used as a surface dressing for unfertile fields, and much of the cowdung is collected by women and children and burnt as fuel or thrown into the *bils* and rivers.

The habit of fencing the fields with bamboos and matting is rapidly extending, but is of very recent origin. So long ago as 1809 Buchanan suggested that hedges should be grown. The people do not like thorns which will hurt their bare feet and the thornless bushes, which might be tried, would possibly take up too much room or die away in the rains. If the practice grows, Government will have to insist on many more roads and pathways.

There is only one kind of plough in general use, made of a single piece of curved wood with a sharp tip, like the head of an anchor, inset. The wood generally used is *sāl* procured from the Madhupur jungle and shaped by the village *mistri*. The iron tips are also locally made and sold separately in any *bazār*. The pole or *is* is made of wood and the yoke may be of wood or of bamboo. Any boy can carry it to the field on his shoulders, and in Khāliajurī it is made still lighter by hollowing out the base. In places the Meston plough weighing 8 seers and costing Rs. 6 or 7 has been tried with success. Implements

The harrow or *moi* is a short ladder made of bamboo. A pair of bullocks drag it over the clods and one or two boys stand on it to increase the weight. The rake or *binda* is a wooden plank with one set of wooden teeth about 5 inches apart. It is drawn by oxen through the young *āus* and jute plants to thin them down and to loosen the earth. A wooden mallet called *ita moogor* or *hāturi* is used to break up heavy clods in a dry field. The *khurpi* is a hand hoe for weeding jute and *āus* paddy. The *kachi* or sickle is used for reaping paddy. The *dāo*, the *kurāl* or axe and the *khanta* or crow bar complete the list of implements in general use.

There are 25,000 carts in the district, but they are not used everywhere for carrying the crops from the field to the

threshing floor. In the eastern parganas bullocks drag the harvest home on bamboo tripods—carts without wheels. The 18th century practice of using bullocks like pack ponies has quite gone into disuse, and a large proportion of each crop is carried home on the heads of the harvesters.

Cattle. There are about two million cattle in the district and fifty thousand buffaloes. The number of bullocks and cows per square mile varies from 1,270 in Kendua to 240 in Gafargãon. The average for the district is 31 bulls, 89 bullocks, 97 cows and 93 calves.

In 1809 bullocks cost Rs. 3 to 6. Nowadays many are imported from Bihar, and a really good pair are worth from Rs. 80 to 250. Cows giving 2 seers of milk cost from Rs. 40 to 100.

The imported animals are chiefly used by professional cartmen, and the cultivators as a whole have to be content with the weedy and undersized cattle that are bred locally. No trouble is taken about the breeding, quite young and unsuitable bulls being allowed to roam among the flocks, and very few of the cattle are properly fed. In the cold weather in the *bil* areas *dhub* grass grows luxuriantly, and for this reason the eastern *thānās* and Sherpur have the best supply of cattle. Elsewhere the cattle have to satisfy their hunger on the meagre grass which grows on the *ails* of fields or on the roadsides. In the rains they are tied up in the *bāri* and fed on coarse grass cut from the *bils*, or on chopped up straw and water. Insufficient grazing grounds combined with the enervating climate and overwork are responsible for the poor quality of the cattle, which is only to some extent made up by the prodigality of their numbers.

In many places it is quite common to see cows yoked to the plough, and the best mofussil cow only gives one or two seers of milk a day. The calf is allowed to suck all day, but is tied up at night and the cow is milked as soon as the calf gets to her in the morning. Indian cows do not give milk until the calf has had a first pull.

Before the Muhammadan conquest Hindus never castrated bulls, but Muhammadans do it regularly. The bullock is worked in his fourth year and its average life is 12 years. A cow has its first calf in its fifth year and usually produces eight in all.

Buffaloes are used for carts and ploughs in all parts of the district, but chiefly near the Gāro Hills and in the Madhupur jungle. There are *bathans* where large herds are kept

in the east of the Netrakona subdivision, and they are well fed on the saccharum grasses of the *bils*. They cost Rs. 30 to 120 each. They are seldom fierce and are sometimes little bigger than cows.

Sheep are to be found here and there, and goats are everywhere plentiful. Fowls and ducks are kept in all Muhammadan households. Pigs are driven in big hoards about the district, wherever an interval between the different crops gives special opportunities for grazing.

A certain amount of cattle disease is endemic, chiefly anthrax and foot and mouth disease. The District Board has a Veterinary Hospital at Mymensingh and employs nine Veterinary Assistants.

In Reynolds' time the Madhupur jungle was estimated to give an outturn of Rs. 10,000, and other forests in the Atia, Kāgmāri and Joānshahi parganas yielded another Rs. 5,000. About 300 square miles of the Madhupur jungle is now covered with trees, and it is the only forest extant. The chief tree is the *gazāri* or bastard *sāl*, and the Māhārājā of Nātor makes an income of about 5 lakhs out of the northern villages. The centre and the south belong to all the Atia landlords in common. The Board of Management has much to contend with in the selfishness of individual co-sharers, who are always encouraging the ryots of their 16-anna villages to encroach on the *ijmāli* lands. Small blocks of the forest are leased out to temporary *ijārādārs*, who have no interest in restocking the portions they have cut. Honey, wax, yams and thatching grass are among the subsidiary products of the jungle, which add considerably to the income of the zamindārs. **Forests.**

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

EARTH-QUAKE OF 1897. THE earthquake of 1897 is a local landmark of time. It occurred on the 12th June 1897 at 5-11 P.M., local time, travelling from north-west to south-south-east and lasting for about a minute and a half. Many public buildings at Sadar including the Judge's house were wrecked, and very few of the two-storied or brick built houses belonging to zamindārs in the mofussil survived. Heavy damage was done to the permanent-way and bridges on the Dacca-Mymensingh Railway and traffic was suspended for about a fortnight. The loss of life was not great, but the loss of property has been estimated at fifty lakhs of rupees. The river communication of the district was seriously affected. In 1898 the Government of Bengal deputed an expert engineer to report on the condition of the rivers and to devise means for deepening the channels. He reported that the earthquake had accelerated the process of silting up, which was primarily due to the natural decay of the Brahmaputra, which had previously fed all the other rivers, and that no improvements which were possible at a reasonable cost could be permanent.

CYCLONES. The district is always liable to sudden storms of almost cyclonic intensity, which are usually more or less local in their path. In 1913 one of these storms demolished all the villages of Muktagācha, that fell in its course, and some 50 people were killed in one village alone. On the 19th April 1845 a storm blew down the walls of the jail and hospital. Tin roofs and jute godowns are always coming to grief, but as a rule the *kutcha* houses of the cultivators seem to escape in a marvellous way.

FLOODS. The people can never be seriously afraid of either flood or drought in sufficient quantity to threaten famine. There are usually more wet than fine days in April and May, and the *âus* and jute crops are more likely to suffer from standing in too much water than from drought. It is rare that there is not sufficient rain in July and August for transplanting the

âman crop, though, if planted late, this sometimes suffers from the rains stopping too early in September.

Floods due to heavy rainfall in Assam sometimes cause the rivers in Tangāil and Bājitpur to flood their banks, with the result that some of the jute and *âus* cannot be reaped. But the people are prepared for this and the damage done is confined to small areas. The floods in 1915 were exceptional in their severity, and the distress caused on this occasion is probably the nearest parallel to that which resulted from the flooding of the Teesta in 1879, when the change in the course of the Brahmaputra began. Martin says that the floods were accompanied by a deluge which washed away half the people and cattle from the country near which the new channel ran.

Except in connection with *boro dhān* there is no irrigation. IRRIGATION. This crop is transplanted in the late autumn from seedling beds in all the shallower *bils* of the Kishorganj and Netrakona subdivisions and in some parts of Tangāil, as soon as the water at the edge of the *bils* decreases to a depth of one or two feet. At this season the water dries up very rapidly, and it is necessary to irrigate the crop almost up to the time when it is ripe. It is done by dividing up the *bil* into terraces by *ails* of mud at short intervals and raising the water from the centre of the *bil* by means of a *kunt.* This is a kind of canoe 13 feet long, one foot broad and one foot deep, of which one end has been cut away. The other end faces the reservoir and moves up and down on a fulcrum. A bamboo over 20 feet long, fixed over the canoe and parallel to it, is weighted with earth and straw at the end furthest from the reservoir, so that unless pressed down by the foot of the operator the entire end remains poised over the water. The instrument is dipped into the reservoir, until a regular stream of water flows down the narrow channels, called *siri*, which are left between the *ails*. If the fields to be irrigated are a long way from the centre of the *bil* or deep *khāl*, which forms the reservoir, several *kunds* have to be used. One *kund* can only raise water 18 inches, but in the flat plains of Khaliājuri and Bājitpur five or six *kunds* are sufficient to spread the water over many square miles.

It is a good illustration of the conservatism of the country that Buchanan in 1809 gave an exact description of this instrument under the name of *jant.* He said that the labour required was disproportionate to the results, and suggested that the *yatan* as used in Madras could raise more water 8 to 10 feet from a well than a *jant* could raise it 18 inches. In

Malda the factories employ a kind of capstan machine, which, if adopted in this district, would greatly extend the cultivation of winter crops. The difficulty is the want of combination among the ryots, who could not easily be persuaded to work together to irrigate all their fields in turn. Protective banks have never been built to prevent the water running away from wide areas, but the smaller *khāls* in Tangail, Muktagācha, Nandāil and Netrakona are always *bunded* at the beginning of the cold weather to prevent the *bils* draining too rapidly. It is a dangerous problem interfering with any of these *khals* and *bils*, whether to deepen them or to *bund* them, for what benefits one village will almost certainly do corresponding damage to another.

CHAPTER VII.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

The landlord class. MYMENSINGH differs from the other districts in the division in that the great bulk of the land is held by a few big zamindārs. The most striking feature in the histories of these families is the large part played by adoption in providing heirs. Some of the largest estates are now owned by widow ladies. In spite of the low incidence of the revenue. the number of estates, whose solvency is beyond question, is strictly limited. It cannot be alleged as a reason for their indebtedness that the landlord class have a standard of living which is above their income. With few exceptions their dwelling and guest houses are unpretentious, their horses and carriages make no show, and they live in Indian style on the *bazār* products of the country. At various times during the 19th century most of them have been absentees living in Calcutta. For a long time their rent rolls were sufficient for their needs, and they left the management of their estates in the hands of corrupt and inefficient *amlas*, who were at no pains to enhance the rents by gradual and legitimate enhancements, so long as they could line their own pockets with large sums in the way of *nazar* and collection expenses and *abwābs*. Litigation has played its usual part in impoverishing the majority of the estates, as also the needs of a large body of useless hangers-on or poor relations. It seems certain that most of the income goes in petty expenditure of a wasteful and indefinite character, for which there is nothing to show. Few of the big landowners have really devoted any of their own time or interest to the economical management of their affairs—the late Māhārājā Surjya Kanta and the present Rājā of Rāmgopālpur and the Rāni of Santosh, 6 annas, being perhaps the only notable exceptions. The Māhārājā got a good start, as during his minority the estate was under the Court of Wards.

The Muhammadan families owe much of their prevailing obscurity and poverty to the subdivision of their estates among female heirs according to the Muhammadan Law of succession, and it is difficult to see what the future of these families can be or how their estates are to be administered at all. It

has taken the Settlement Department two years to unravel the proportionate share of the profits to which the various wards in the Karatia Estate are entitled, the different interests of the cousins in various estates and *patnis* having descended from the same ancestors in different ways. Their Hindu *amlas* have always cheated their masters and in the old days permanent tenures in the most valuable villages were alienated without sufficient consideration and appropriated as *Khārijā Tāluks* by influential servants. By this means the descendants of Isā Khān at Haibatnagar and Jangalbāri have lost much of their original property.

The middle class.

The bulk of the Hindu *bhadralok* are themselves petty *tālukdārs* and tenureholders, living in inaccessible villages in tin-roofed houses with wood or mat walls. Those who cannot live on the rents they collect whether in produce or cash take service with the zamindārs, each big estate having an enormous staff of ill-paid *nāibs* and *mohurrirs*, who know no English and have no real knowledge of business methods, but make up for their poor salaries by intriguing with ryots for their share of the *abwābs* and go-between fees. The professional classes are chiefly represented by the pleaders and *mukhtedrs* at Sadar and Subdivisional head-quarters. There are also jute dealers and school masters, some doctors and chemists combined, a few contractors and the clerks working in the Government and District Board offices. There is no doubt that this class feels the pressure of the rise of prices, for their standard of living has been going up, while the cost of food, house rent, and travelling has increased inordinately. It is the marriages and education of their children for which this class is always getting into debt, and while no foreigner can help admiring the unselfishness of the parents who deny themselves all luxuries and many necessaries to give their sons an education, which will bring them Government appointments, the tendency, which is seen in all classes to educate their sons a step higher than they have themselves reached, is responsible for the problem of the educated unemployed and the slow progress of commercial and industrial enterprise in Bengal.

It may cost a zamindār in a good position Rs. 40,000 to marry a daughter, and it costs a Hindu clerk on Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 about Rs. 400. School fees sound very low, but they mount up with boarding expenses, and private tuition is often required. No house in Mymensingh can be rented for less than Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 a month, and an officer on Rs. 150 may

have to pay Rs. 25 or Rs. 30. Travelling by train or by bicycle is cheap, but the cost of long journeys by *palki* or *tikka gari* is a great strain on the *bhadralok*, who have to take their families from place to place to visit relations or on transfer. The poorest pony 12 hands high cannot be bought under Rs. 80, and it is difficult to get carts at four annas a mile. In 1866 carts could be hired for from 12 annas to 14 annas a day and before that 8 annas was the regular rate.

The agriculturists are the really prosperous class as well as by far the most numerous. Practically all, including the *bargadārs*, have occupancy rights, and until the recent settlement all were cultivating a larger area than that for which they were paying rent. The average family certainly cultivates 3 to 4 acres, but the statistics are very misleading. A few big holdings of over 400 acres in Dewānganj bring the average up, but on the other hand there are many small holdings held by the same ryot in different villages or under the same or different landlords in the same village. Except in Patiladaha only one in 25 or 50 acres is sublet to under-ryots. Agricultural class.

Fixed or lump rents are very much the exception, but the average rent bears the same low proportion to the profits, as the revenue of the zamindārs to their collections. In a very few villages there is one common rate, but in the great majority the land is classed as *Khod*, *Pālān*, *Awāl*, *Doyam* and *Chhiyam*. In the older Gazetteers it is stated that except in two parganas the rent is not based on the crop, but generally speaking the lands which are assessed highest in any village are those which grow the more valuable crop. In the eastern parganas *boro* lands carry the highest rate, in Alāpsingh jute lands, and in the jungle *āman* lands. It is a peculiarity of the district that *khod* or homestead land, even when extended at the expense of the profitable agricultural land, is always the most heavily rated, though still higher rents are paid occasionally for the *Pānbaraj* on which betel creepers are grown. The Bihar system by which homestead lands are *belagān*, or rent-free, seems fairer, especially as their superior value is in most cases due to the personal exertions of the ryots. A large *nazar* is paid by ryots excavating a tank, even when this is for the general benefit of the village and a sanitary necessity. In many cases in virtue of this sum of money down, the area of the tank is afterwards excluded from assessment. Rents.

For homesteads the highest rents are realised in Alāpsingh and Hosenshāhi, Rs. 7 or 8 being normal and Rs. 11 or 12

the maximum. In the eastern parganas the high lands are so rare as to command fancy rates in some cases. For agricultural land the ordinary rate is from Rs. 3-8 to 6 an acre all over the district. Cultivators holding under an intermediate tenureholder or under a resident *khārija tālukdār* pay a little more than those holding direct under a big landlord, and *korfā* ryots, or undertenants holding under an ordinary *jotedār*, pay almost double.

There are innumerable villages where no partition has taken place and the ryots hold under from 7—160 co-sharer landlords, who cannot combine to appoint a common manager or to make *ijmāli* collections. The result is that the smaller co-sharers do not find it pay to maintain a regular collecting establishment, but send an agent round once every three or five years to collect what he can. Arrears of rent are seldom collected and there are never any enhancements. This and the inaccuracy of all previous measurements help to account for the great difference between the nominal village rates and the actual amount found to be paid per acre, when the total rental is divided by the area under cultivation. The produce of an acre of land in the district may vary from Rs. 140 to 25 and the selling price from Rs. 400 to 150. It will be obvious therefore that the ryots' rent proper is one of the least important factors in his budget. This is borne out by the fact that in Iswarganj and Alāpsingh the rates of rent are as high as anywhere in the district, and the people are apparently the most prosperous. In Sherpur and Patilādaha the rates are low, but there is less certainty about the crops and the soil is sandy; consequently this is the only part of the district where in a normal year agricultural loans are ever wanted and where the burden of indebtedness is really heavy. In the Tangāil subdivision the people are distinctly poorer and less independent. This fact has nothing to do with the rent, because within the district limits of variation the maximum and minimum are often to be found in adjoining villages and estates in this subdivision. It is possibly due to the greater density of the population and the smaller size of the average holding.

The prosperity of the village apart from the fertility of the soil and its safety from inundations depends far more on the character of the *māthbars* and the conduct of the zamindāri *āmla* than on the nominal rent. In Tangāil especially the *āmla* are all powerful and collect double the rent in the form of collection expenses and other *abwābs*. In Jafarshāhi and

Alāpsingh villages the headmen oppose the *āmla* and make common cause with the villagers. Before a measurement and its accompanying enhancement can take place, the *māthbars* have to be approached and promised that their own rents will not be increased. This is secured by a substantial *anugraha kami* or lump deduction, which, added to the fact that their lands are never honestly measured, results in the rich men paying a much lower rate than their less influential neighbours.

Few of the *nāibs* get salaries of more than Rs. 30 a month and the muharrirs only eight or nine. This means that they are bound to supplement their pay in the same way as the *paiks* and *barkandazes*, who get Rs. 4 or 5 and are allowed to take from annas 4 to a rupee as well as daily *khorāki* from every person on whom they serve a notice. The number of *āmla* who have to be supported by the tenantry is enormously increased by the absurd complication and reduplication of the papers in which the accounts are kept. A new *chitha*, or a list of plots, with their four boundaries is drawn up with no regard to the order of the same plots in a previous *chitha*. Before the new *jamabandi* can be prepared, *khatians* have to be written out for each ryot showing the different plots of which he is in possession with their areas and rate. The land is divided into numerous classes which nobody not born and bred in the village can distinguish and verify, and each class has a different rate. Rent is calculated for each plot singly, not on the nearest *katha* to the nearest anna, but say on 1 *arha*, 2 *bhutas*, 3 *kathas*, 2 *karas*, 1 *kāy* and 17 *til* to the nearest *ganda* or pie. From the *jamabandi* a *jamawāsilbāki* is prepared whose 24 to 400 columns are sometimes written on paper three yards wide. This form shows the rent for each class of land separately with reductions and deductions for 20 different things such as *batta*, *izāfā*, jalkar, diluvion, which have had no practical application to the village for generations, and whose headings even the old *āmla* cannot interpret. The result of all these columns is that neither the *jamabandi* nor the *jamawāsilbāki* is of any use for collection purposes, a separate *talabbaki* paper has to be prepared for each ryot showing the total rent and arrears due and the kists in which he pays it. This is not kept in such a form that payments in several years can be shown in parallel columns. The whole thing has to be written afresh each year. Transfers are usually noted in separate papers called *galāgat*, which are never linked up intelligently with the *jamabandi*. The *āmdani* or cash book,

Zamindāri management.

showing payments as they are made, is the only register which could not be simplified threefold. The *kabuliyats* are also written in meaningless stereotyped language at four times the necessary length. As a consequence when a landlord sues for increased rent under section 105, the collection papers of one village have to be brought in a cart and kept in the record room in tin trunks large enough to accommodate all the luggage of a passenger on a P. & O. liner. One of the greatest boons the district settlement can confer on the landlords will be any influence its records may have in causing them to rewrite their collection papers on its basis.

According to the landlords' papers rent is usually payable in 4 or 12 *kists*. As a matter of fact the ryots pay when they like without regard to the interest which is added for *kists* in arrears. Nearly all rent comes in after the principal crop is cut, jute in the west, *boro dhan* in the east, and *āman* paddy in the north.

Some of the big landlords, especially along the banks of the Jamuna, make as large an income out of *nazar*, or money charged for transfers and new settlements, as out of the rent proper. This is usually 25 per cent. or 50 per cent. of the purchase money paid by the transferee. Though holdings are nominally not transferable in the district, the buying and selling of whole or partial holdings goes on freely. The landlord is never asked for his permission beforehand, but sooner or later the purchaser pays the *nazar* and has his name substituted in the landlords' collection papers as the holder of the jote. Often this transaction does not take place till 3 or 10 years after the sale deed or *kawāla* has been registered.

There are 36 Registration offices in Mymensingh and the number of deeds registered rose from 120,150 in 1907 to 162,071 in 1915. About 80 per cent. of these deeds are sales of ryoti holdings or mortgages. The number goes up in time of scarcity but an increase spread over a long term is certainly not due to agricultural depression. Many of the sales are not to *mahājans* but to other ryots, and are due to temporary indebtedness caused by special extravagance, *e.g.* litigation and marriages.

Prices.

The price of all agricultural produce has risen enormously in recent years. Only 8 or 10 years ago the price of jute was Rs. 5—7 a maund, and of rice Rs. 2-8. Until the outbreak of the war jute was selling at Rs. 12 to 15, and rice at Rs. 5 a maund. Straw costs Rs. 5 to 7 a cartload, whereas 10 or 15 years ago it could be had for nothing, and the fowls, vegetables

fruit, eggs, milk and other farmyard produce, which are taken to the local *hāts* in exchange for the oil, clothes, and luxuries in which an ordinary ryot indulges, have all doubled in money value in the last 15 years. The following list gives some index to the change in money value of some of the main products :—

	1811.	1840.	1901.	1915.
	Rs. A.	Rs. A.	Rs. A	Rs. A.
Common rice ...	1 0	1 6	3 4	6 4 a maund.
Wheat ...	0 8	2 8	5 0	8 4 a maund.
Mustard oil ...	0 2	0 2	0 7	0 10 a seer.
Jute ...	...	1 8	5 0	8 0 a maund before the war, 12 to 15
Ghee ...	0 6	1 0	1 8	2 4 a seer.

In 1794 the Emperor made an allowance of 7 annas a day for the maintenance of the family of a respectable Muhammadan Sheikh called Fuzzullalla. In 1839 it was possible to contract to feed 32 prisoners for Re. 1 a day, whereas it now costs Rs. 8. Wages have increased in much the same proportion. In 1814 the Collector writes that "the wages of a cooly was one anna per diem and this was more than that description of people receive in the Mafassil". In 1832 their wages were Rs. 3 a month and up to 1901 not more than 5 annas per diem, whereas now 8 annas a day is the minimum and in the jute *godowns* they earn Re. 1 to Rs. 2. Agricultural labourers living with their masters have not yet risen beyond Rs. 48 a year with their food, but garden coolies and grass cutters and *punkhawalas* expect from Rs. 11 to 9.

In the meantime it cannot be said that the necessities or even the luxuries of the ryot, who grows enough *dhān* for his own consumption, have increased to anything like the same standard. He is still content with a collection of small huts surrounded by a fence of bamboo matting or jute sticks, with a very minimum of clothes, and the boats, agricultural implements and food of his forefathers. The tin lamps, the earthenware pots, the wooden *hookahs*, the two penny half penny ornaments and toys which he brings back from the *hāt*, are all of the most tawdry and cheap manufacture. No doubt he spends more on umbrellas, medicines, crockery and cooking vessels than his

grandfather. But these are small items, and there is no sign that the tin-roofed houses and roomy guest houses, which are conspicuous in every village, date from very recent years. Now that cultivation has extended so much, the use of tin instead of thatching grass is really an economy. No more money is spent on wells and tanks than in the past, and only the absolute improvidence of the people and their fondness for litigation can account for the great majority not being out of debt as the result of the inflated prices of the last few years. The one thing of real importance to the cultivator, that has gone up in price corresponding with agricultural produce, is labour. Unfortunately the Muhammadan cultivator is born lazy, and pride prevents even the poorest of them from doing any earth work or manual labour, which is not strictly a part of agriculture. The Muhammadan peasant considers himself a gentleman, and this would be to his credit, if it did not mean that even to measure his own field with a chain is derogatory. When the Settlement Operations were in progress, khalasies had to be imported from Hazāribāgh to carry the Kanungos' plane table from field to field at *bujharat*. When a ryot thinks that the level of his field is unsatisfactory or that an *ail* requires heightening, or there is a new plinth to be built, he hires up-country labourers to remove the necessary earth at 12 annas or Re. 1 a day.

Material condition of the cultivators.

It is this laziness and false pride that has prevented the inhabitants of Mymensingh from taking full advantage of the vast inflow of money into the district during the last few years. They now employ labourers from outside districts to cut their paddy, to steep their jute and to carry it to market. It is the cost of the labour, which they used to do themselves, that is solely responsible for increasing the cost of cultivation.

Indebtedness.

How far the burden of debt lies on the agricultural population and how far it is still increasing is a difficult problem. The Settlement Officer of Dacca has collected statistics according to which the average indebtedness is Rs. 21 per head in those parts of Dacca, which border on Mymensingh. Possibly the figures are misleading, and it is doubtful if 70 per cent. of the ryots are seriously in debt. They are so improvident, that they think it natural and proper to be in debt to some extent, and they will take all the advances at 24 per cent. interest that the *mahājan* will give them. Generally speaking they do not realise how costly their short loans at monthly interest are; they look upon the *mahājan* as the friend, who comes to their aid when they are in temporary

difficulties, and their promises to him come before the rent or any other claims, when a new crop is harvested. The *mahājan* on his side cares chiefly for his interest, he has always as many demands as his capital will sustain, and he is not anxious to sell up his clients and to claim their lands. When he does buy up an occupancy holding on a money decree, he usually resettles it with the owner at an increased rent. Occasionally he insists on a produce rent. Only in Dewānganj and parts of Tangāil has an appreciable proportion of the land passed into the hands of non-agriculturist money lenders. Produce-paying tenants are not as numerous as in Dacca. There are very few, who pay a fixed weight of paddy or jute; the great majority are *bargadārs* paying half or one-third of the produce, whatever it may be.

On the whole it does not appear that this system has been a source of serious abuse in this district. Nearly all the *bargadārs* have jote lands of their own. They employ their surplus ploughs in cultivating the land of widow neighbours or of those who have lost their cattle. If the owner wishes to oust them, there are always others glad to give them new lands on the same terms. On the other hand there are many who have cultivated the same lands on these terms for generations. like the ryot in Tangāil who had ploughed one field for 30 years but agreed to absent himself during the settlement season on the promise that he would get the land back after attestation was over. They are an unambitious class and apparently quite content with the profits they get. Generally speaking the *bargadārs* and their landlords are on good terms, and it would be a mistake to advertise the right of commutation, which has never been claimed in this district since the Tenancy Act was passed.

The only part of the district, where the question of produce rent has really been a problem is with the Hajong tenants of Susung round about Durgapur. This is the only pargana where rents in fixed quantities of paddy are common, and the usual figure of from 6 to 10 maunds an acre is considerably heavier than the highest cash rent. All the same they are rents which the tenants are well able to pay, and for which they have usually contracted with their eyes open from the beginning. Sometimes, however, cash rents have been changed into produce rents in defiance of the principle of section 29 of the Tenancy Act. **Produce rents.**

One thing, however, is quite certain The *bargadars*, though often they get their seeds from the landlord and occasionally

also their ploughs, nowhere approach the condition of labourers, though that term is sometimes used in their kabuliyats. They are exactly of the same stamp and status as their fellow cultivators on cash rents, and would laugh at any one who seriously classed them with the labourers they themselves employ to cut their paddy or to do earthwork.

To return to the representative Mymensingh cultivator with a holding of 6 to 10 acres, considering his wants and knowledge, his material condition can only be described as prosperous. He grows enough paddy to feed his whole family for at least nine months of the year and the sale-proceeds of his jute are sufficient after purchasing paddy for the remaining months to pay his rent, the yearly wages of one farm servant, and the interest on his debts. His own cows supply the family with milk, because it is not considered dignified for a Muhammadan to sell milk. Vegetables and certain kinds of fruit like cocoanuts, plantains and jack fruit grow in abundance in almost every *bāri*. There are few villages where at least in some months of the year every villager cannot catch his own fish in the nearest *bil* or ditch. There is no objection to fishing with rod or basket even in reserved fisheries, and the villagers have the right to fish all shallow *bils* twice a week free even in the Khaliājurī area, where *jalkar* is the chief source of revenue.

The climate of Bengal does not seem to punish its people for living in wet clothes or lying on damp beds. To a European the village *bāri* with its attached cowsheds, surrounded on all sides by bamboos and trees and the irregular water-logged ditches from which the earth has been taken for the plinths of the houses, must seem the height of dank discomfort. The native seems quite pleased with it, because the richest makes no attempt at improvement in any of these respects. His house is at least waterproof, and there are few which have not a big *baithakkhana*, where the men sit and talk in the evening and receive guests. The furniture consists of wooden *taktas* or platforms, some mats, a few stools and occasionally chairs. There is always a sufficiency of brass utensils for cooking and for drinking water, and the rafters of the roof take the place of cupboards, just as strings fastened to the mat walls take the place of shelves. The supply of *dhān* is kept in big baskets, or in separate round godowns raised from the ground on short wooden piles.

The Muhammadan ryot has therefore enough food, shelter, and leisure to be happy, and the biweekly *hāt* gives him all the social excitement he requires. It is only for fuel and for fodder

for his cattle that he experiences some difficulty as the result of the recent extension of cultivation. The Madhupur jungle covers all the centre of the district, and there are few villages where the cultivators cannot find some jungly patches from which to gather firewood. Cowdung is, however, the common resource. That grazing lands have become so scarce is the ryot's own fault. He ties his cattle on the roads and *hālats* and in the fields, as soon as the crop is cut, and, if the supply of straw falls short, he does not mind if the cattle suffer.

His children get all the exercise and amusement they want, playing in the fields and the tanks and ditches. The eastern villages, however, are for six months in every year islets in a huge sea, resting on a foundation of earth and bamboo extensions, and packed to overflowing with men, women, children, and domestic animals. Here life must be wearisome in the extreme. Every hut touching another is a separate *bāri*, and there are no courtyards in between. The women and children, who cannot go out in boats for their daily work, get no exercise at all, and their tempers and morals suffer accordingly. In all parts of the district, those who are ill must suffer unnecessarily, for though all classes in India are willing to nurse their own kin most devotedly, medical and sanitary knowledge are absolutely lacking, and doctors and dispensaries and modern medical comforts are usually far away.

As a conclusion to this chapter it may be interesting to give the budget of two representative families.

A—Superintendent of a zamindāri estate in Kishorganj keeps up two establishments one at Tāljanga, consisting of himself and two servants, and another at Rautha, where his wife, mother, daughter, one nephew and one servant reside. One nephew is at school at Kishorganj, where he lives with a relation.

Income.

	Rs.	A.
Salary at Rs 75	900	0
30 maunds of paddy, the rent of 4 acres of land given out in borga	90	0
Nazar, etc.	300	0
Total ...	1,290	0

Expenditure.

		Rs.	A.
	School expenditure, including books for the nephew at Kishorganj at Re. 5 per month	60	0
Clothing—	42 *dhoties* at Re. 1-2 each	47	4
	6 *saries* at Rs. 2 each	12	0
	Other clothing	30	0
	3 pairs of shoes	18	0
	3 umbrellas	3	0
Food—			
	Rice, 48 maunds, at Rs. 5-8	264	0
	Pulses, 10 maunds, at Rs. 5-8	55	0
	Fish, Rs. 4 per month	48	0
	Mustard oil for rubbing and consumption, 10 seers per month	80	0
	Spices, Rs. 2 per month	24	0
	Vegetables, Rs. 2-8 per month	30	0
	Salt, 8¾ seers per month	9	0
	Fuel at Rs. 2-8 per month	30	0
	Milk at Rs. 12 per month	144	0
	Sugar, sweets and fruit	30	0
Lighting—	Kerosine oil at Rs. 2-8	30	0
	Servants' wages, 3 at Rs. 4	144	0
	Rent to landlord	24	0
	Medicine	20	0
	Pujas and other religious observances ...	50	0
	Travelling	30	0
	Total ...	1,182	4

A Muhammadan family of 16 members.

Source of Income.

880 rupees of produce, and profits on jute trading of about Rs 500		
Total income	Rs	1,380

Expenditure

	Rs.	A.
Dhoties of 5 adult males, 30 at Re. 1-2 each	33	12
Do. for 5 boys, 20 at 10 annas each ...	12	8
Chadars for summer wear for 5 adults at 10 annas each	3	2
Chadars for winter wear for 5 adults and 5 boys at Rs. 3	30	0
Gamchas (long country towels) for 5 adults and 5 boys, 2 each, 4 annas ...	5	0

	Rs.	A.
Kurtas, one for each male member, except infants, 10 at Re. 1	10	0
Caps	2	10
Saries for mother, 5 at Re. 1-4 ...	6	4
Do. for 3 wives (eight for each) at Re. 1-8	36	0
Umbrella and miscellaneous items ...	9	0
School fees for 2 boys	12	0
Books and stationery	6	0
(boys attend the local primary school).		
5 tins of kerosine oil at Rs 2-4 ...	11	4
Rent and chaukidari tax	37	0
Religious observances, *e.g.*, *Īds* and for sacrifice of animals at *Bakrids* ...	25	0
Rice, 15 seers per day, at Rs. 5-8 ...	752	8
Dāl. 15 maunds in the year, at Rs. 7-8 per maund	112	8
Oil (mustard). 2 maunds	42	0
Salt, 2 maunds in the year, at Rs. 3 ...	6	0
Spices, 2 seers per month, at 6 annas ...	9	0
Onions, 10 seers per month, at 3 annas ...	22	8
Sweets and confectionery at Rs. 2 per month	24	0
Tobacco, 2 maunds a year, at Rs. 7 ...	14	0
Pān supāri at Rs. 2 per month ...	24	0
Festivities, guests, etc.	30	0
Cattle and agricultural implements ...	100	0
Total ...	1,376	0

CHAPTER VIII.

OCCUPATION AND TRADES.

ACCORDING to the Census of 1911, out of a population of 4,326,122, 84 per cent. are dependent on agriculture and 2⅓ per cent. on fishing. These are the main occupations of the natives of Mymensingh; nearly all the coolies and domestic servants are up-country men, the professional boatmen mostly hail from Dacca, and there are no manufactures of importance.

The rest of the population falls mainly under the following classifications: –

1.	Cotton, jute and other textile industries ...	30,300
2.	Trade in textiles, hides, etc.	28,000
3.	Oil manufactures	23,300
4.	Grocers and sellers of oil	29,500
5.	Fish dealers	20,000
6.	Money lenders	17,000
7.	Rent receivers	20,200
8.	Professions	4,500

Except among the Gāros and Hajongs the occupation of the women of the district is confined to the domestic duties, including the feeding of the cattle, husking the paddy, and fetching water from the tank or well. They do not work in the fields or go to market, and seldom touch the jute.

Jute has been treated in the Chapter on Agriculture. There are machines at Sārisabāri, Bhairab, Mymensingh and other important centres for pressing it into bales for easier carriage to Calcutta, but otherwise it undergoes no manufacturing process in this district. Early in the 19th century *pāt* was woven into cloth by low caste Hindu women in Dinājpur. It was used for bedding, for covering bales of cloth, and for rice and sugar bags. If the annual outturn exceeded one lakh, as Buchanan says, it is obvious that it cannot have been unknown in this district. Until the failure of indigo the local people grew enough merely to make ropes for their boats, houses and cattle.

Between 1800 and 1860 there must have been 40 to 50 indigo factories in the district. In 1873 there were only three left. As is shown in Sir J. P. Grant's minute on the Indigo Commission Report of 1859, the market price of the manufactured article (Rs. 10 for 2 seers or the outturn of one bigha) did

not allow the planter to pay for the raw material more than a third of what the cultivator could get by growing rice in low-lying villages, and in the richer districts of Bengal like Jessore and Nadia the ryot was actually losing Rs. 7 a bigha. In Bengal, also, the cultivators were more difficult to deal with than in Bihar. So long ago as 1820 Buchanan wrote about the difficulties of indigo planters in Eastern Bengal :—

"They had to give up cultivating the plant owing to the frauds and extortions to which every man cultivating on a large scale in this country must be exposed. Each ryot will only grow a small quantity, so even for 100 maunds of indigo the area of cultivation must be widespread. The ryots will not cultivate it without advances nearly the value of the expected crop, and having received the money they are careless about the cultivation, and the ploughing, sowing, and weeding have all to be watched by the planters with the result that there are endless disputes in spite of the detailed agreements that are always drawn up in writing. The Mandals receive the advances and distribute to smaller ryots getting a commission on the crop.

"The causes of ill-feeling in the indigo districts is attributed by the ryots to the manufacturers treating them as slaves after they have once taken advances and refusing to allow them to repay balances and relinquish cultivation. Also to his servants cheating them in the measure of the land and the measure of the weed. They also complained that the whole produce did not equal in value the rent, which the zamindārs heighten out of spite.

"The zamindārs said the manufacturers were so insolent and violent that no respectable family could live near them and they encouraged the ryots not to pay rent.

The planters defended themselves by saying that the zamindārs hated the authority as members of the ruling caste which they enjoyed with the lower natives and could not make their usual illegal extortions."

Buchanan's conclusion is that Europeans were not perfectly subject to the Courts of Law and that fresh licenses should be refused, as it was not politic that British subjects should be put on the same footing with the natives. Europeans who are not responsible to the Company for their conduct should have their business restricted to the principal seaports.

Regulation V of 1830 was the result of several big failures in Calcutta. It made the evasion by a ryot of his indigo contract punishable by a Magistrate, but it was rescinded in 1835. This

left the planter with no remedy except physical force or the Civil Court, if the ryots after taking advances refused to grow any plant, and experience showed that both remedies were insufficient when the ryots could rely on the assistance of the landlords. Very few of the planters had kept any lands in their *khas* possession, so they could not eke out their profits by growing country crops like their rivals in Bihar. They therefore sold their interest in the land to the neighbouring zamindārs.

Indigo could be grown with greater profit compared with other crops on *char* lands, and perhaps this is why the grievances of the ryots did not lead to any serious disturbances in this district. The ryots of Char Algi near Gafargāon look on the indigo days as a golden age, when they paid practically no rent and were allowed to grow their own crops on all but the 3 or 4 annas of the village area in the *char*, which they cultivated with indigo for Mr. J. P. Wise.

The only traces of the industry that now remain are a few ruins, chiefly of vats, at Baiganbāri, Bhelamīri, Dewānganj and other riverside factories. The names of the planters, Wise, Kallonas, and Brodie will always live in the names of the big *tāluks* in Hosenshāhi and Alāpsingh parganas.

Oil Mills. Mustard oil is now the most wide spread manufacture in the district. There is a colony of Telis or Muhammadan Kulus in many roadside villages. The *ghāni* or mill is worked by a bullock inside a shed and, but for the creaking noise when it is working, its presence would never be suspected. In Kishorganj Namasudras are employed to draw the mills. These consist of five parts, the *gachh* or foundation, the *naipat* or tube in which the *jait* or log revolves, the *joal* or yoke and the *katli* or capstan-like lever which is pulled by the bullock. The *jait* has to be renewed every month and the total cost is Rs. 20. Three-tenths of the seed used is the average produce in oil, and it takes six days to crush 3 maunds. If the seed is not the property of the Teli he gets one-third of the oil and the cake as the price of his labour.

Sugar. Sugar is another industry which is more properly treated under agriculture. The sugarcane is crushed into juice by wooden or iron machines worked by a single bullock, and the juice is converted into *gur* by boiling. There is no manufacture of sugar from *gur*.

Cotton is largely cultivated on the borders of the Gāro Hills and also in the Madhupur jungle. The Gāros have a simple machine called *charki* for passing the cotton through two

highly polished bamboo rods, moved by a handle, which separate the seed. About 80 per cent. is sold in an uncleaned state and shipped to Narāyanganj. Some of it is made into *rezais* and pillows in the district. Cleaned cotton fetches Rs. 20 to 25 a maund and the other Rs. 6 to 9. The Gāros, Hajangs and other low castes still weave their own coarse clothes on primitive looms, which are set up in the compounds of their houses and worked by the women and boys. There are also families of Hindu Tantis and Jugis and of Muhammadan Julahas scattered all over the district, especially in Tangāil and Fulpur, who make *gamchas* for the market. The material is cotton imported from England. The District Board is doing its best to keep the industry alive with a school for weavers at Tangāil.

The East India Company had cloth factories at Kishorganj and Bājitpur. In the middle of the 19th century Kishorganj and Bājitpur and also the other Bājitpur in Tangāil produced embroidered *sāris* of a high quality. *Sāris* from Bājitpur in the Kishorganj subdivision still find a ready market in Calcutta. The Kishorganj *tanzeb* was as prized as the Dacca muslin. Muslin is still manufactured by some 40 families in Bājitpur and sold in Dacca, but the material used is entirely English yarn and there is now no trace of cotton growing in the locality except the names of such villages as Kapasātia. Weaving.

The process of cleaning cotton for the finished thread by means of a *dullum*, a roller, which in Mymensingh was manipulated by foot, is described at length by Taylor in his Topography of Dacca, 1840. Also the spinning of the thread by women so fine that 115 miles only weighed one pound. The resulting muslins were much better than those woven from English yarn of an equal tenuity, but the spinners even in his day used 80 per cent. of the latter, not only on account of its cheapness but because it took so long to search for sufficient quantities of the hand-made article of the same quality and size and appearance at the village *hāts*.

The industry has died out because no market can be found for these home-made products. One of the few Kishorganj weavers still working gets Re. 1-4 for a *tanzeb* which it takes three days to make and the material costs 9 annas.

Coarse bamboo mats and baskets are manufactured in most villages and the finer *sitalpati* mats made from a particular reed that grows in the marshes of Tangāil and Kishorganj are known even in Calcutta. Patitas, a low caste of Hindus, make mats of *muttra*. *Hogla* mats made out of the reed called after

the village of that name are common north of the Brahmaputra. In Char Iswardia, just opposite Mymensingh, 75 families make a special cane box which is very popular. There used to be a considerable industry in paper until the cheapness of the machine-made substitute ruined the home-made article. In 1870 it was being made from jute in Atia, and there is a village called Kāgazigrām near Astagram of which all the inhabitants were paper makers.

Dairy produce

The so-called Dacca cheese is made on the bank of the Dhanu at Itna and other places. It is exported in considerable quantities. It is a kind of hard cream cheese made in balls like the common Dutch variety with a fairly strong, but not unpleasant, taste. The splendid grazing afforded in the cold weather by the luxuriant beds of *dhub* grass in the Joānshāhi and Khāliajurī parganas, areas which are flooded for seven months in the year, attracts large herds of cattle from the western villages. Milk costs one anna a big seer and *ghee* is largely produced from the surplus.

Charcoal is extensively manufactured at Gabtali on the main road from Mymensingh to Tangāil, where it enters the Madhupur jungle.

Tobacco leaf is mixed with its own weight of treacle (*lāli* or *rāb*) by the consumer or by low caste Hindus and Muhammadans, who sell it in little black cakes. The richer people buy Rangpur tobacco in the bazārs, they do not smoke the Mymensingh-grown weed.

Metal industries

Manufactures from metals are limited in the district. It is said that iron was originally found in the Madhupur jungle and in the Dacca portions traces of smelting operations have been found. Brass has been used for a long time for the cooking utensils, water pots, plates and glasses of the more conservative classes. The material is procured from Calcutta in sheets and hammered, not moulded into shape. The Islāmpur and Kāgmāri bell-metal ware is the most finished and most expensive, but there are villages in every *thānā* where the braziers sit night and day in the same open hut till they fall asleep with the hammer in their hands. The price of the finished vessels is Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 a seer.

In 1870 the number of blacksmiths in the district was estimated at 2,430 with 659 forges. It is not likely that the number has much increased, for the trade is most conservative. They make ploughshares, nails and the common agricultural implements like *dāos* and *hāsulis*. *Kodālis* or spades are chiefly imported from England, and so are scissors, razors,

knives and the carpenter's tools. The bellows used are really ingenious, but, like the boats and irrigating instruments of the district, they were exactly the same one century ago and perhaps ten. The only new industry is the manufacture of steel trunks painted in gaudy colours which are so conspicuous in the shops of Mymensingh and Netrakona. Tinsmiths in the same shops also make lamps, chiefly from empty kerosine tins. It is impossible to imagine what people did without these tins when only local vegetable oils were in use. Besides providing receptacles for paint, lime, grain and all sorts of other commodities, they are made into furniture, roofs and walls of houses, and boats.

Goldsmiths and silversmiths are particularly numerous in Netrokona. Like the braziers they seem to work all the 24 hours. Their resources are so limited and their designs so clumsy, that it is strange how much they are patronised. For work in gold they are paid Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 6 a tola and for silver 4 annas to 8 annas. The gold is usually provided by melting down sovereigns. Shakharis at Kishorganj make shell bangles, but the best kinds come from Dacca and cost Rs. 3 to Rs. 50 a pair. The beads used by Hindu mendicants and others are imported. Those made from the seeds of the *rudraksha* come from Benares and those of *tulsi* from Navadwip.

There is no industry in dyes. The pigments used by the potters and Achārjyas who make the clay and straw images, which adorn the Kalibāri of every important village and also the wayside shrines, are imported from Dacca. The best quality of *sindur*, which is used by Hindu wives to mark their foreheads, comes from China.

Gunpowder is manufactured by a man of Portuguese extraction in Hosēnpur bazār. In all *thānās* there are families of Muhammadans who make fireworks and bombs.

Boat building

There are carpenters in all towns, who make the furniture and doors of houses, the wooden parts of ploughs, stools, beds and almirahs. Boats are also made on the banks of all the rivers and *khāls* in the eastern *thānās*. These boats possess very fine lines which have descended from countless generations. They are very safe, and usually very clean, but their accessories are of the most extraordinary primitiveness. The rudders are entirely separate and tied on with rope; they are used for propulsion as well as for steering: the oars are bamboos with any shaped piece of wood tied on for a blade; the rullock is non-existent, or consists of two pieces of bamboo thrust into the gunwale, so that the oar may be tied against

the one which stands most upright. The position of the rower is so cramped and high above the water, that it is impossible to get any real leverage on the oars. The ordinary trading boat which carries jute and rice and pots from village to village will carry from 60 to 150 maunds, is 20 feet long, 7 feet broad and draws 18—30 inches of water.

Fishing boats are of all sizes and shapes from the 40 feet long *othar*, with only one-third of its keel in the water and both the bow and the stem rising high into the air, to the unwieldy dug out and the cockle shell punt.

The carpenter's tools consist of a *bāyis* or hatchet costing Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2-8, *bāsuli* or adze 12 annas, *batali* or chisel 7 annas, *rāndā* or plane 7 annas, *korāt* or saw Re. 1-0, and a *turpun*, an ingenious drill worked with a bow and string, 4 annas. They never use a carpenter's bench or a vice, but sit on the floor holding the wood on which they are working with their toes.

Potters

Potters' hamlets are numerous throughout the district. As a rule the clay costs them nothing. Besides all sorts of cooking utensils, *gāchhas* (stands for kerosine lights), *dābas* and *kalkis* for pipes, they make big troughs for storing rice and feeding cattle and rings for *kutcha* wells.

The potter's wheel is a wooden plate about 9 inches square with solid arms protruding at each corner. To these is affixed a heavy rim, 4 or 5 inches in diameter, of earthenware mixed with straw and jute. The centre is mounted on a wooden pivot about 9 inches long. A piece of stone with a hole in it for the pointed end of the pivot to stand on is firmly embedded into the ground. The operator then sits on one side and keeps the wheel in a horizontal position by placing his left hand near the central plate, and sets it into motion by turning the rim clockwise with his right hand. After the wheel has once been set in motion, the hands are taken off and the motion is accelerated by turning the wheel with a bamboo stick placed against a spoke. When the wheel is going at its utmost speed, the operator touches the flat cake of clay on the central plate, which had hardly been noticed before, with his fingers, and as by magic a high cylinder appears, which gradually assumes the different girths of the familiar *kalsi* or water pot. The larger vessels have all to be moulded by hand.

The kiln or *puin* is a concave platform on the ground with a sudden cavity in the centre for the furnace. This furnace is connected by a passage with the open air and all the rest of the circular platform is piled round with the pots that are to be

baked, and roofed with a platform of bamboos and earth. Each layer of pots is covered with firewood and straw, and when the earthen crust gets too hard, holes are made to allow of the exit of smoke. The colour of the pots depends on the time they are left in the kiln and the extent to which the smoke is allowed to escape.

There is a great consumption as in the last days of six of the Bengali months all the earthenware cooking utensils of a Hindu family have to be changed, and when a family goes into mourning a new pot has to be used for each meal of rice. Boatloads of these manufactures are hawked about the villages all through the year and at 3 annas to 8 annas a pot a carge may realise Rs. 250.

Darzis are all Muhammadans and their sewing machines are to be seen in every bazār. Barbers are Hindus with a few exceptions in Jamālpur. They are now taking to soap in shaving but not to hot water, and the lowest fee for a shave is one pice. They chiefly carry on their trade in *hāts*, where their takings are Rs. 2 a day. They have to attend to customers of all classes so those who have caste pride confine themselves to the houses of the richer people.

The shells which are to be found in every flooded field, chiefly but not always those of large snails, used to be collected for burning into lime. Now that Sylhet lime is available this industry has come to an end except with a few families in Kāgmāri.

The pearl fishery has suddenly risen into importance at Bangalpārā near Astagrām on account of the find of a pearl for which the fisherman was paid Rs. 200 on the spot by a dealer. A Dacca merchant paid Rs. 800 a few days later and it is said that the same pearl has since been sold in Calcutta for Rs. 22,000. Mussels are collected by fishermen along the banks of the rivers especially in Bil Mashka, and any one who likes may search 100 for 4 annas. Most of the pearls are of a rather dark pink colour.

Bricks are made by up-country coolies, usually working under foreign contractors. When a bridge or road is contemplated, the previous season has to be devoted to acquiring a brickfield and importing the coal, the next to burning the bricks. Suitable clay seem to be available in most places. In the old days the local people must have made their own bricks, though it is said that the mould was not known until introduced by Europeans. The bricks used in the old indigo factories and

temples and mosques are very solid though not so large as those used in the indigo factories of Rājshāhi.

Although the Muchis dry the skins of cattle and goats, they are exported from the district in a very unfinished state. There is nothing to show that boots or shoes were ever manufactured in this district, as Buchanan describes in Dinājpur, where a man and wife could turn out 8 pairs a month at 8 annas each. In Sherpur, Jamālpur and Uchakhīlā a certain amount of local leather is made into cheap shoes. Drums are manufactured on a great scale in one or two Kishorganj villages.

Fishing

About one-fortieth of the people of the district are professional fishermen, chiefly belonging to the Kaibartta and Jhālo castes. Good caste Muhammadans are not supposed to deal in fish. The selling price of the fish caught in the *bils* and rivers of the Khāliajurī and Joānshāhi parganas in the east of the district is calculated at 5 lakhs, in the Meghna, at Rs. 70,000, in the Jamuna at Rs. 1,60,000, in the Brahmaputra at Rs. 50,000 and in the smaller rivers and *bils* in the interior it cannot be less than another 4 lakhs. Of the total of 12 lakhs, 40 per cent. goes to the landlords and the non-fishing *ijāradārs* and 30 to the fishermen and 30 to the intermediaries or *nikāris* who sell it in the bazārs.

The fishing trade employs a large number of people besides the fishermen, who seldom deal with the public direct. The fish are sold from the boat to a *nikāri* who conveys them by boat to the nearest land *nikāri*, whose business it is, again at a commission, to carry them to market. At Gurai or Dīghirpār in the early dawn the boats are met by gangs of coolies who carry the fish in baskets to Bājitpur (7 miles) or Katiādi (17 miles). Other boats come to Nilganj, and the fish is carted to Kishorganj (6 miles), or to Nandāil, whence it is carried to Bālipārā (12 miles) and thence perhaps to Mymensingh and other places by railway. It is no wonder that with the risks of this journey in the hot sun in baskets which are never cleaned of the scales of previous consignments and which smell horribly however fresh the contents, a *rohit* fish which realised 12 annas to Re. 1 at the *khola* fetches Rs 3 to 4 at Nandāil and Rs. 6 to 8 at Mymensingh.

On the smaller rivers the usual arrangement is for the fisherman to pay one to five rupees a boat to the ijāradār, who leases the block from the landlord of the adjoining village. *Māthbars* of the fishing caste usually take up the *ijārā* of *bils*. To do this in the eastern parganas requires quite a fair amount of capital. There can be no permanent villages in these flooded

areas, so at the beginning of each cold weather 40 male labourers must be imported and a row of huts called a *kholā* erected for them and their families on the bank of the *khāl* or *bil*, which is to be the scene of their operations for the season. Each male gets Rs. 80 on the average for the season and each female, who cuts up and dries the fish that cannot be carried to market fresh, Rs. 40. A fleet of 15 boats is maintained. Brushwood for the *khēos* has to be brought from Ajmirīganj, the landlords' agents have to be feed to prevent loot, and the nets will cost about Rs. 1,000. A *darijāradār's* annual account at one of the Khāliajurī *kholās* may therefore work out as follows :—

			Rs.
40 male labourers	...	...	3,200
25 females ...	...	...	1,000
Bamboos for 25 *khēos*	...	...	500
Puja expenses ...	...	...	100
House accommodation, etc.	...	...	100
Nets, *khēojāl*, 40 pieces	...	...	800
„ *othār*, 2, at Rs 100	...	...	200
„ *jhāki*, 10, at Rs. 15	...	...	150
Boats, *sarangās*, 15, at Rs. 30		...	450
Othār, 2, at Rs. 200	...	...	400
	Total	...	7,200

Depreciation on both nets and boats must be calculated at 40 per cent., so with Rs. 1,600 paid to the *ijāradār* the annual expenses are Rs. 7,600. He makes about Rs. 500 from small fishermen for the right to fish with *chānda* and *jhāki* nets. He is supposed to make a profit of from 26 to 60 per cent., but there is always a risk that the *bil* may have become exhausted. One Tāra Chand Mālo of Khāliajurī lost all his capital on the Chhandania *bil* and gave it up. Two years later, nobody having taken it up in the meantime, he borrowed Rs. 10,000 and made a profit of Rs. 30,000. This shows what an evil annual leases are. When the lease is for a term the *ijāradār* gives the fisheries an occasional rest in his own interest.

The fish which cannot be sold fresh are cut up in the compound and dried in the sun on bamboo platforms protected from the crows and kites by nets. No curing is done. Ajmīriganj is the great market for dried fish. Tippera, Chittagong, Noākhāli and Rangpur are all customers for Mymensingh fish. Dried *pābdā* fish is said to be the best. Dried *rohit* realises Rs. 15 to 20 a maund, the smaller fish Rs. 6 to 8 a maund

The total value of the dry fish exported from the district is said to be about Rs. 40,000.

Fishermen as a class are not well off, though some of the *māthbars* who take leases from the landlord direct are exceptions. They do not take kindly to cultivation in the non-fishing season and few families have incomes equal to those of the professional cultivators among whom they live. The cost of fishing tackle and boats and the heavy wear and tear they undergo are partly responsible. Usually much of the profit goes to *ijāradārs* of a non-fishing class, who come between the landlords and the *dar-ijāradārs* of the fishing community. In no other way can we account for the comparatively small income of the landowners from *jalkars*. According to their own returns these amount to about 1¼ lakhs, whereas, as has been said above, the fish sold apart from those eaten by the people who catch them are worth over 12 lakhs.

Methods of fishing.

The system of fishing by a *khēo* is only used where the water is sluggish. Brushwood is surrounded in a suitable place in the *bil* by bamboos stuck upright in the mud. These *khēos* have to be made early in the cold weather and their circumference is 100 feet. Weeds accumulate among the bamboos and attract fish to their shelter, especially when individual fishermen begin to disturb the clearer portions. Bamboo pegs are placed in the mud below the brushwood to prevent the fish from burrowing in the bottom and sooner or later the *kheo* is surrounded by a *daljāl*, 8 or 10 nets each 20 feet square sewn together. They are fixed to the bottom of the *bil* by bamboo pins (*kamri* or *guji*), while the surface end is fastened to bamboo posts. A day or two later the *khēo* is raised. The brushwood is taken out by hooked bamboo rods, and the nets drawn into the bank or a waiting line of boats. Fifteen or twenty men are required in this operation for each *khēo* and five or six *saranga* boats.

Another method of fishing is with the *othar* boat and the *othar* net. The boat is very long and narrow, with a raised bow and stern, which remains 5 or 6 feet above water, and the net is similar to an ordinary throw-net, only several times larger. Two or three men spread out the net along the length of the boat and drop it into the *bil* or river as the boat is rowed on by two other men. The net has folds at the bottom end, carries leaden weights, and describes a hollow cone as it sinks. As the net is pulled out of the water by the string tied to its top end, the fish slip into the folds and are hauled on to the boat with the net.

Dragnets called *bērjāl* or *sāgar-bēr* may be two or three hundred cubits in length and 30 or 40 cubits in height, leaden weights are attached to the bottom ropes and bamboo floats to the surface end. These are used for dragging the whole breadth of a river. Two big *pānsi* boats, each with a crew of 8 or 10 men, start close together. When they are ready one dashes across the river at the utmost speed, dropping the net as it goes along. Then the crew row together again, yelling at the top of their voices, so as to frighten the fish away from the open space between the boats into the meshes of the net, as it slowly completes its circle.

The *behāl*, called *kharra jāl* in Mr. De's report, is a bamboo lever contrivance for catching fish that come with the stream. The net is triangular in shape, fastened on two sides to bamboos each 30 or 40 feet long. They are pivoted on upright posts at such a height that when the base of the net touches the bottom of the river the bolted end remains within reach of a man standing on a cross bamboo in the scaffolding. When the net has been in the water for 10 minutes, the man presses down the bolted end of the bamboos, first with his hand and then with his feet, until the net is clear of the water; the fish drop into the boat at his feet, as the manipulator unfastens the apex of the net.

The nets described above are used by professional fishermen and are made from *sunn* or hemp fibre. The villagers who catch fish for their own consumption have an endless variety of methods and instruments. Fishing with hand nets is free in all navigable rivers and in most *bils* at least twice a week. In the cold weather it is a common sight to see hundreds of villagers marching to a rendezvous, where they invade the *bil* in a solid line and it is a marvel that a single fish escapes to stock the *bil* for another year. These amateurs seldom return empty handed. From one *bil* in Nikli-Dampārā I met the inhabitants of villages as far away as Dhuldia returning with an average of two fish 2 or 3 feet long and four small ones. The chief instruments used on these occasions are the *pala* or *tarpu*, a basket with a broad open bottom and a narrow opening at the top, through which the fisherman puts his hand when he has succeeded in planting his basket over a fish. Others take shrimping nets and *konches*, bamboo harpoons with 12 wired points which spread in the air when hurled at a fish in shallow water and contract in its flesh.

After every shower of rain small fish like whitebait are caught in bamboo cages at every point where there is a fall

from one field to another. Several boat loads are caught in this way in the Mriga *hāor* every day in November. Another simple way of catching fish is to bale every atom of water out of a ditch or *bunded* up portion of a *khāl*. Children amuse themselves in this way on the roadside, when the dry season begins.

In the rains, and also in the cold weather, villagers wade at night through the shallow water, carrying torches of jute sticks. The fish are attracted by the light and speared in great numbers.

Taken all round, it is probable that the fish caught in all these ways equal in weight and number those caught by professional fishermen for sale.

The earthquake of 1897 raised some *bils* and destroyed the fish in others. The Fulkocha *bil* is one of those which from being very valuable became barren for several years. The rise in the price of fish is chiefly due to the cheapness of money, but there is no doubt that the supply is diminishing also. The extension of jute steeping is unfavourable to the better varieties and the cultivation of the *bils* and *hāors* in the eastern thānas has seriously curtailed their breeding places.

No measures are taken to protect the fry of big fish, and no Bengali has ever been seen to throw a fish back into the water, even in the certain knowledge that it would become one hundred fold heavier in a few months. It is true that the fishing season usually extends from December to April only, and the fish are not therefore much disturbed during the breeding season, but there is no deliberate intention of maintaining a close time, and little is known of the breeding habits and seasons of the different species. Apart from privately owned tanks which are artificially stocked with fish for their own consumption by rich gentlemen, there is no attempt to breed fish artificially or to restock exhausted *bils*. If Government passed a protective law and tried to enforce it by a low paid staff of the strength that would be required, any amount of *zulum* or dishonesty would be the result. Even to restrict the fineness of the meshes of the nets and to bar the mat-like *pāli* would operate hardly on those fishermen, who catch the smaller varieties as a relish for their curries.

Agricultural labourers

There are a certain number of agricultural labourers who live with their master's family and earn a yearly wage of Rs. 36 or Rs. 48 with their food. This landless class is limited, and Mymensingh depends entirely for its hired labourers on the domiciled up-countrymen or the swarms of Nuniyas, Dusādhs

and others, who come from Bihar every November by river and road, and return by train in April and May. In July many of them again return for the jute season. They can earn over a rupee a day, carrying jute from the boats to the press and from the press to the flat or train.

Most of the station coolies, landlords' *barkandāzes*, professional cartmen, and Europeans' servants are up-countrymen. The District Board employs imported labour for all earthwork, and there is a striking increase in the extent to which Dacca or up-country coolies are hired by the Muhammadan cultivators to weed and cut their jute as well as for making new *ails* or plinths, digging tanks, or altering the level of their fields.

In the east and north of the district labourers from Farīdpur, Jessore and Tippera are largely employed to cut the *boro* paddy. From the middle of Chaitra or beginning of April for about a month each day a procession of 70 to 125 boats can be counted sailing up the river Dhanu. Each boat carries 10 to 15 able-bodied men. Many go to Sylhet, where they are paid 20 to 40 per cent. of the paddy reaped, the rate varying with the imminence of flood and being less on the banks of the Meghna. One man is supposed to cut 120 bundles or *āntis* in a day and from 15 or 20 bundles he would earn 20 seers, so that at the end of the season he cannot have less than 50 to 70 rupees worth of paddy to carry home. The total amount thus exported from the district as the price of labour only is reckoned at from 150,000 maunds to 80,000 maunds and from Sylhet 2,00,000 maunds.

Just as most of the professional cartmen are up-countrymen, many of the boats which are hired by the month by *mahājans* for carrying jute and rice belong to Dacca people and the hired *mānjhis* are mostly of Dacca birth. Some of the largest boats are owned by *mānjhis* from Mrizapur in the Central Provinces. They spend about 6 months in the district seeking profitable freights, and they have a bad reputation for petty thefts.

Trade is carried on to some extent by gypsies and potters, who carry their wares on foot or by boat to the remotest villages, but practically speaking the village *hāt* is the beginning and end of all trade in this district. According to an enactment of 1790 the proprietary right in the ground on which *hāts* take place is to continue vested in the landlords, but the public are to have the free use of it. This was repealed by Act XXVII of 1871, the reason apparently being that the practice of making a profit out of *hāts* had become too strong to make it possible to enforce the 1790 order.

Landlords usually manage the *hāts* by means of *ijāradārs*, who pay anything from Rs. 5 to 2,000 per annum for the right to collect tolls from the temporary stall holders and a commission on all articles sold. *Hāts* vary much in importance, some being held twice a week, some once. They are seldom more than 3 or 4 miles apart. They are held on the banks of

Markets.

rivers or on high sites, where good shade is available. The first step is to put up a row of low shelters, which are used as stalls for perishable articles. Vegetables, milk, fish, fruit, oil, rice, salt and pulses are sold and bought at all these *hāts*, and there is always a group of low caste Hindus waiting to change rupees into copper and two-anna bits. Gradually barbers and cloth merchants and toy and ornament dealers begin to attend, and permanent shops are built round the centre square. A blacksmith settles in the neighbourhood and also a country spirit vendor, and this is no doubt the way in which all the important centres and towns in the district have originated. It speaks badly for the morality of the district that when a landlord wants to establish a new *hāt* to annoy a rival, he imports a colony of prostitutes as his first step.

Shops in the more important marts like Katiādi, Hosēnpur, Fulbaria, Bakshiganj, Datta-Bazār sell English glass, mirrors, crockery, writing materials, medicines, lamps, stores, matches, cigarettes, and in the adjoining godowns villagers sell their jute and rice to the *mahājans*. It is only in the so-called towns like Netrakona, Jamālpur and Kishorganj that there is a daily bazār for the supply of eatables. In these towns clothes, blankets and all the other necessities of the population are to be obtained. The inhabitants of the district are not in the habit of writing to Calcutta, and, just as in the villages, what a man cannot buy locally, he does without.

The *bepāris* and small traders are almost invariably Bengalis, chiefly of the Shāhā, Teli, Banik, Jogi, Pāl, Tanti and Basak castes. So are most of the jute commission agents and touts. In some of the bigger bazārs Mārwāris, Agarwālās and all up-country castes are found. They deal in jute, Manchester cloth, and hides. Money lenders come from all classes of Hindus, and not a few Muhammadans have taken to it recently.

Most of the *hāts* are marked in the map and there is no important place without one. Sherpur, Nālitabāri, Mohanganj and Shambhuganj, opposite Mymensingh, are perhaps the noisiest and biggest. They all take place on the public way;

which is blocked by an impenetrable mass of chattering humanity, all too busy and preoccupied to get out of the way of passing horses and bicycles.

Trade.

From the inland *hāts* the chief products of the district are carried by cart or country boat to the railway or to the river-side marts, which are accessible in the rains to the huge flats of the steamer companies. The chief places to which this kind of flats come are Mirzapur, Jamurki, Elashīn, Jagannāthganj and Sārisabārī in Tangāil, Bāhādurabād in Jamālpur, Netrakona, Mohanganj and Gogbazār in Netrakona, and Hiluchia, Nikli-Dampāra, Dilālpur and Bhairab in the Kishorganj subdivision. Carts from all parts of the district cross the Brahmaputra in January and February to buy cheap paddy from the villages of Nālitabāri and Haluaghāt. There has always been a considerable trade with the Gāros in cotton, honey and wax in exchange for oil, salt and dogs at the *kotes* along the foot of the hills, but otherwise there is not much inter-district trade.

The district could not get on at all without the plough and cart bullocks which are bought by dealers at the Sonepur fair in Chapra in November and brought by road through Rājshāhi, crossing the Brahmaputra at the ferries between Mādarganj and Dewanganj. Many of them are intercepted at the Jamālpur mēlā. Others go straight on to Dacca, and it is these travelling cattle more than carts which make the main roads of the district so dusty during the cold weather. Country-bred ponies of all sizes are largely imported, but the quality is inferior and the price high.

Other imports are betelnuts and *pān* from Tippera, cocoanuts from the southern districts of Bengal, wheat, barley and cattle from Bihar, and corrugated iron, metals, piece-goods and all sorts of manufactured articles from or *viâ* Calcutta.

In spite of the fact that much rice is now imported even from Rangoon, jute ensures that the exports exceed the imports by many lakhs. Of the total amount of jute grown in the Province in 1914, 20 per cent. was computed to come from this district. There are 5½ lakhs of acres under jute, so the total crop must exceed three hundred thousand tons and allowing for wastage and internal consumption jute brings sixty million rupees into the district annually.

Fairs.

In addition to the weekly or biweekly *hāts* there are some annual fairs at certain places. The Jamālpur mēlā, which goes on from February to April, is the most important, as it is

the distributing centre for most of the cattle which come from Bihar in the cold weather. Its income at 10 annas for each animal sold has exceeded Rs. 9,000. A full account will be found in the Gazetteer chapter under Jamālpur.

Another important fair takes place at Kishorganj in August. Merchants from other districts sell considerable quantities of piece-goods, shoes, hardware and miscellaneous articles. The Dole fair at Hosēnpur in March is very similar to the Jhulan fair at Kishorganj. The mēlās at Bālijuri near Mādarganj in February, at Sherpur in April and at Porabāri in December are of local importance.

An important mēlā which owes its importance more to religion than to trade takes place at Gupta Brindaban in the Madhupur jungle. There is a Bairāgi Akhra in a secluded spot of the forest, which is almost Himalayan in character, and pilgrims come from all parts of Mymensingh and beyond to worship the gods who live in the giant trees and to bathe in the Sāgardighi tank.

The annual bathing festival of the *Astami Snān*, when Hindu ladies come from all parts of Bengal to bathe in the Brahmaputra also encourages temporary fairs at the chief bathing places, Jamālpur, Baiganbāri and Hosēnpur.

CHAPTER IX.

COMMUNICATIONS.

In the time of the Mughal Viceroys the main road from Dacca to Northern Bihar ran through the Tangāil subdivision. It is described in Rennell's Road Book as the Dacca-Malda road and the principal stages in this district were :—

Dumroy ...	...	34 miles from Dacca, where it crossed the Bunsi river (Bangsa).
Chandapatul	...	6 miles 1 furlong.
Mirzahaut (Mirzapur)	...	11 do. 4 furlongs.
Puccolo (Pakulla)	...	6 do. 4 ditto.
Attyah ...	...	8 do. 8 ditto.
Santosh ...	...	4 miles 2 furlongs, where it crossed the Lojung river.
Ghandrackpur	...	4 miles 7 furlongs, where it crossed the Joobne river.
Belcuchy in Pabna	...	9 miles 3 furlongs, where it crossed the Conie river.

No one now using the road from Mirzapur to Tangāil would suppose it to be an old trunk road. Some portions are mere tracks, the breaks are numerous and there are no signs of *pukka* bridges. The main ferries, however, remain the same, the Jamuna having taken the place of the old Jabuna and Konai, and in the rains occupying the whole distance between Gandrackpur and Belcuchy. Roads in the 18th century.

Bisni was an important place in Rennell's time and the Malda road had a branch from Pakulla leading north through the present Tangāil and Jamālpur subdivisions *viâ* Batcora, 9 miles, Booketah, 3, Hummidpur, 8, Chantarra, 6, Moodapoor (Pookarya), 10, Bowla, 10, Naranpur, 7, Hajipur, 6, Shahzadpur, 7, and Dewanganj, 14, to Chilmāri, 21.

An alternative road to Bihar is called the Purneah second road by Rennell. Crossing the Bānār river at Toke, 52 miles from Dacca, it passed through Mymensingh, Baiganbāri and Piyārpur, where it crossed the Brahmaputra to Sherpur Daskahania, as it was then called. This road was important for

military purposes and may have been older than the Pakulla road. It connected Dacca with Mymensingh and Jamālpur in the early days of the Company when Jamālpur was a military cantonment. Its continuation from Mymensingh to Jamālpur and Sarisabāri is styled the Mymensingh-Subarnakhāli road, though its terminus at the old seat of the Hemnagar family on the Brahmaputra has been washed away for many years. The road was alternately neglected and improved: since the opening of the Railway in 1884, it is little used except by cattle travelling from Bihar to the big *hāts* in Mymensingh and Dacca, and the fine masonry bridge over the Brahmaputra at Toke, which is said to have been blown up in the Mutiny, is still replaced by an ordinary ferry.

Other roads described by Rennell are to Susung-Durgapur from Sagardi (four miles short of Toke on the Dacca side), *viâ* Egārasindur, Dugdugga, Osumpur (Nursundy river), Modarganj, Bokainagar (Momensingh) and Simulkandi (Kangsha river), and to Ajmeriganj in Sylhet, *viâ* Sagardi, Janglebāri, Pāuchcouniya and Itna. The existence of this road seems to show that the eastern part of Kishorganj in the last century has suffered a process the reverse of raising, for no roads are possible in the direction of Itna, east and north of Janglebāri, now. A branch from Ajmeriganj crossed the Meghna at Madarganj to reach the present police-station Khāliajuri on the Dhanu river, which was apparently then called the Bolee.

In 1872 Reynolds says there were 146 miles of road in good condition and 108 miles of tracks. Only Rs. 8,000 was allotted by Government for road improvement. There are now 950 miles and new roads are being made every year. The total expenditure on maintenance alone is over a lakh.

The opening of the Dacca-Mymensingh Railway in 1884 and its extension to Jagannāthganj on the Jamuna was of tremendous value in opening out the Sadar and Jamālpur subdivisions. Another branch from Singhjāni (Jamālpur) to Bahādurabad, where a steamer ferry crosses the Brahmaputra to Fulchari was opened in 1913. It has already accelerated communications with Calcutta, Darjeeling and Assam. The new line is exceedingly popular with the up-country coolies, who spend the cold weather in Dacca and Mymensingh and return to plough their own fields at the beginning of the rains. Another line in connection with the Assam-Bengal Railway is under construction through Bhairab Bazar, Kishorganj, Iswarganj and Gauripur to Mymensingh; from Gauripur a line will run to Shāmganj, and from Shāmganj there will be two

branches to Netrakona and Jaria respectively. It is possible that the Jaria line will be extended to Durgapur and the Netrakona line to Mohanganj. This railway will be of great advantage to the northern subdivision, which has no river communication with Mymensingh and has fewer outlets for its jute by country boat than Tangāil or Kishorganj.

Not less than three separate surveys have been made for lines between Tangāil and Mymensingh direct, or by joining up Tangāil and Bausi, or Tangāil and Jamālpur. The railway will be expensive to make, as any alignment must cross stretch after stretch of *āman* paddy lands, which are five or six feet under water in the rains. When the broad gauge line is opened from Ishwardi to Serājganj, an attempt will be made to extend it to Mymensingh, but there is great difficulty in finding a suitable high bank for the steamer ferry on the Mymensingh side anywhere south of Pingna. At present travellers from Mymensingh to Tangāil usually go by train to Jagannāthganj, steamer to Porabāri, and then 12 miles by country boat, bicycle or horse. The *chars* are broken by shifting channels which must be negotiated in different ways at every season of the year, and a permanent bridged road is impossible. The alternative route to Tangāil is 60 miles of road, *viâ* Muktagācha, Madhupur and Kālihati. This is the finest road in the district with several large *pukka* bridges, and ferries only at Gābtali, Kālihati, Solakura and Pauli. The straight road to Tangāil *viâ* Fulbaria and Deopārā was abandoned some years ago, and the bridges in the jungle portion having been allowed to fall into disrepair, it is barely passable by carts for two or three months in the spring. A good road goes to Gopālpur from Madhupur, and thence to Hemnagar. It is passable at all times of the year. Another road with only one bad break connects Gopālpur with Ghatāil and Kalihati. Roads Tangāil subdivision

Other roads in the Tangāil subdivision are from Jamurki or Pākulla *viâ* Karatia as well as *viâ* Dilduar to Tangāil, Tangāil to Bāsāil, and Tangāil to Elashīn and Nāgarpur. The latter is important, as Elashīn is a big jute centre, and if there were not so many breaks in this road, it would be the easiest means of access to Tangāil, as launches and steamers can always reach Elashīn *viâ* the Dhaleswari. There is a road parallel to the Jamuna from Sārisabāri to Tangāil, which is the quickest way of riding to Tangāil in the cold weather, parts of it are very good going, but the portion between Hemnagar and Bhuapur, about 6 miles south, is too low to be capable of permanent improvement except at ruinous cost.

Roads Jamālpur subdivision.

The Jamālpur subdivision is well served with good bicycling roads and in the cold weather it is possible to ride or drive anywhere. On the Jamālpur-Madarganj road two rivers, the Jināi and Chatal, are unbridged, and for two or three months at the end of the rains, when there is not sufficient water for the proper ferry boats, these places are the cause of much inconvenience. There is a road to Bakshiganj *viâ* Kamarerchar, direct from the beginning of the Sherpur road on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra, and another from Sherpur *viâ* Sribardi Sambhuganj, which goes on to Mahendraganj at the foot of the Gāro Hills. Both are full of breaks with water up to the saddle in September and October, but, as the road from Dewānganj to Bakshiganj is at best a cold weather track, it would be good policy to bridge one of them completely, now that the road from Jāmalpur to Dewānganj has been made obsolete by the railway.

There is a narrow road with many bamboo bridges between Sherpur and Bangāon. The Nā'itabāri road has always given trouble as its high embankment passes directly across the flood current of enormous *bils*. There is one permanent ferry on this road and 5 or 6 other breaks are now traversed by wooden bridges which are not wide or strong enough to admit of wheeled traffic.

The Piyārpur-Sherpur road has no ferries and is always in fair condition. A branch runs directly north from Chandrakona through Nakla to Nālitabāri, but the northern portion passes through very low and jungly villages and is hard to find even in the cold weather.

The Sherpur-Jamālpur road (9 miles) is metalled. A bridge over the Sheri river is badly wanted, as there are months in the year when the water is not deep enough for the ferry boats nor yet shallow enough to ford in comfort. Another difficulty is that the ferry boat at Jamālpur lands passengers nearly a mile away from the beginning of the *pukka* road, with only a track through heavy sand to bridge the interval.

On the south-west of the railway line there are useful local board roads to Tulsipur *viâ* Shāhāzadpur and to Dīgpāit.

Roads Sadar subdivision.

The principal roads in the Sadar Subdivision are to Muktagācha, 10 miles, all metalled, to Fulbaria, 13 miles (5 miles *pukka*) to Trisāl, 13 miles, from Bālipārā to Nandāil, 11 miles, and from Gafargāon to Bhālukā, 13 miles. On the north of the river, Fulpur can be reached either from the Cutcherry Ghāt (14 miles), the disadvantage of this road being that a mile of sand has to be traversed on the other side before the

embanked road is reached, or *viâ* Tārakanda (17 miles) from the Sambhuganj Ghāt, one mile south of the Collector's office which is the starting point also for Netrokona and Iswarganj. The road to Iswarganj (16 miles) and to Atharabāri (25 miles) is *pukka* as far as Rāmgōpālpur, 11 miles, and has a branch to Gauripur Bazār which then connects with Shāmganj and the Netrakona and Durgapur roads. A useful road, always in bad condition, runs from Baiganbāri to Bahādurpur, 8 miles north.

The Fulpur road goes on to Halnaghāt, but the breaks are innumerable and even in the cold weather it is no pleasure to bicycle or ride. In the rains Haluaghāt is entirely cut off. There is quite a fair cold weather track connecting Haluaghāt and Nālitabāri.

Netrakona is connected with Mymensingh (25 miles) and Kishorganj (41 miles) by fully embanked roads which are passable throughout the year. The road to Durgapur leaves the Netrokona road at Shāmganj, and is quite good as far as Jaria, where it crosses the Kangsha. From there it is full of breaks, and the Someswari is so shallow that no regular ferry can be maintained in the winter months. The sands are very treacherous, so fording without a guide is dangerous.

A good road of 10 miles connects Netrakona with Purbadhala, meeting the Shāmganj-Durgapur road at Jlāspur. The direct road from Netrakona to Durgapur, *viâ* Deotukan, is still hardly fit for cart traffic.

From Netrakona eastwards there are roads *viâ* Barhatta to Mohanganj (16 miles) and to Teligati (10 miles). This place is also the terminus of the excellent bicycling road direct from Mymensingh *viâ* Gauripur into the heart of the Kendua thana. The road from Mymensingh to Kendua *viâ* Iswarganj and Sandikona (34 miles) is bridged throughout, and goes on to Gog-Bazar, 2 miles east, where the land of *khāls* and *boro* fields begins. With the exception of the very inadequate track from Karimganj to Badla in the south and the Barhatta-Mohanganj road in the north, there are no roads at all east of a line drawn from Nazirganj in thana Durgapur to Katiādi on the Brahmapatra *viâ* Teligati, Gog-Bazār and Nilganj. Cross country riding is possible, but only on ponies which do not mind swimming rivers. Even boat communications are bad, as with the exception of the Dhanu river there are no waterways running north south and those running east west take circuitous paths.

To Kishorganj the usual route is to Gafargāon by train, and thence 6 miles along the Toke-Dacca road parallel to the

Brahmaputra, crossing it at Hosenpur, and 10 miles by a road on the other side, half of which is *pukka*. The crossing at Hosenpur is very trying in the cold weather, as though the Brahmaputra is nowhere fordable south of Mymensingh the high banks at this place are very wide apart, so there is a great expanse of fine sand to negotiate.

In the rains it is a common practice to take a boat direct from Gafargāon to Hosēnpur.

Roads Kishorganj subdivision

From Hosēnpur roads go to Katiādi and Bājitpur, to Nandāil and to Dēwānganj Bazar. From Kishorganj there are fair roads to Karimganj and Jayka, east and south east, to Katiādi south, and to Atharabāri and Nīlganj north. A continuation of the Nīlganj road *viâ* Tarāil Hāt to Kēndua is badly wanted to avoid the tiresome detour *viâ* Atharabāri.

Bhairab Bazar is connected with Katiādi by a road, but the easiest way of reaching this important jute centre is by steamer from Narāyanganj, or by train *viâ* Tangi. It is unfortunate that there are only three other steamer *ghāts* in the east of this district, *viz.* Dilālpur opposite Bājitpur town, Bangalpāra near Astagrām and Betanga which is quite in the wilds. The next stopping place of the Surma Valley Despatch service is Ajmeriganj on the Sylhet side opposite Khāliājurī. Now-a-days only a cargo service runs up the Dhanu river to Sonāmganj.

The river system has been described in Chapter I. The larger rivers are all used by country boats carrying, anything up to 1,600 maunds, to export jute and rice to Dacca and Goalundo and to hawk round earthenware utensils and various imports in the cold weather. Generally speaking the travelling public do not make much use of the rivers. There are, however, certain well-known places between which country-boats ply regularly in the rains. They are called *gayna* boats and there is a fixed fare for passengers and luggage. The best known routes are from Gafargāon to Hosēnpur, Kauraid to Matkhola, and from Netrakona to Nāzīrganj. In Kishorganj and Tangāil and parts of Netrakona officers do their touring in the rains by means of *green* boats hired from Dacca at about Rs. 120 a month including the crew, and the people have to use boats to get from their houses to the fields and the *hāts*. Launches can get to Tangāil in August, and there is plenty of water for them at all times of the year in the Dhanu and Meghna rivers, but they are useless in the Jamālpur, Sadar and Netrakona subdivisions, though the Director of Land Records' launch has been as far as Mohanganj along the Kangsha.

Carts are plentiful except in Kendua and Kishorganj thanas. The professional cartmen are all up-country men and use bullocks imported from Bihar. Small ponies are plentiful throughout the district, but they are only used for pack purposes to any extent in Tangāil and Kishorganj. Ponies can go any where in the cold weather, and the best riding is probably in the south of Tangail, Dewānganj, and Sherpur. In Jamālpur, Gopālpur, Netrakona and the Sadar thanas the rice fields get too hard, there being no winter crops to speak of, and in Kishorganj the country does not dry up sufficiently till January and then the first shower makes the going incredibly heavy.

There are a large number of elephants in the district, for the most part fairly distributed, but the mahouts are a class to themselves for stupidity and boorishness. *Tikka garies* are not much dearer than carts, and are extensively used along the Jamālpur-Sherpur, Mymensingh-Muktagācha, Mymensingh-Fulbaria, Mymensingh-Netrakona, Mymengsingh-Iswarganj and Gafargāon-Kishorganj roads. Quite poor people club together, and use them on the more established routes. There are no *ekka garies* at all, which is difficult to understand seeing how useful they are in Pabna, Rajshāhi and other adjoining districts.

The ferries maintained by the District Board are on the whole sufficient, and serve their purpose quite well. They have been gradually bought up from the landlords on payment of 10 years' profits. In the old days the landlords admitted that they were bound to provide ferry boats and they gave land rent free to the ferrymen. Early in the 19th century it was proposed to resume them on the ground that the assets were not included in the permanent settlement. There are no papers to show that the proposal was acted on in this district. Considering the large revenues appropriated by Government from the important ferries at Mymensingh and Jamālpur it is a legitimate grievance that more money is not spent on making the landing places reasonably convenient for foot passengers and especially for bullock carts and *tikka garies*. The cruel punishment which has to be meted out to bullocks before heavy loads can be got on to the ferry boats at any of the main ferries would appal any one not used to the callousness with which animals are treated in this country.

The District Board rest houses number 26. They are all marked on the map, which is issued with this volume. Those at Deopāra, Nālitabāri, Madhupur, Tangāil, Katiādi and

Gafargāon have the best situations. New bungalows with *pukka* roofs are being built at Barhatta and Mirzapur. One is badly wanted at Dilālpur for officers arriving by steamer, and at Ratanganj, as a centre for the jungle.

For an officer wishing to tour with tents, all along the north bank of the Brahmaputra there are splendid camping places. Fulkocha and Amritola in Jamālpur, Bālijuri in Mādarganj, Elenga in Tangāil and Fatehpur in Bājitpur have all the requisites of a comfortable camp. In the Madhupur jungle water is the difficulty. The best sites are Salgrāmpur, Singerchala, Sāgardighi and Kālmegha.

CHAPTER X.

LAND REVENUE.

THERE were three different settlements of Bengal under the Mughal Emperors. The first settlement in 1582 by Rājā Todar Māl fixed the revenue of Sarkār Bājuha at Rs. 9,87,921, but this included a large part of Rājshāhi and Dacca. At Nawāb Jafar Khān's settlement in 1722 the unit of *Sarkārs* was abandoned, and the whole province of Bengal divided into 13 *Chaklas*, subdivided into 1,600 parganas. The greater part of Mymensingh was included in Chakla Jehangir Nagar, which comprised 236 parganas with a revenue of Rs. 1,92,829. Husain Shāh is said to have organized the Dewān Khānā or revenue units which were the original parganas. They are still fairly compact and homogeneous areas in this district, though in some parts villages of different parganas are unaccountably mixed up. In the days before maps it is probable that villages were assigned to units without any clear idea of their locality, and an unscrupulous landlord would encourage villages, which were dissatisfied with their own master, to attach themselves to his pargana without any regard to their geographical position. Some parganas may be partitioned shares of earlier parganas, the various heirs having given their names to their own portions.

Early settlement.

Origin of parganas.

Mir Kāsim added many taxes in 1763, but as regards land revenue his action was confined to the resumption of *Jāgirs*, *i.e.*, lands given to soldiers on condition that they provided a certain number of armed forces, elephants, cavalry and infantry for the defence of the province. The corresponding *nawāra* lands, out of whose incomes large fleets had to be maintained to act against the Portuguese and the Arracanese and other pirates, as also against the inroads of Assamese kings down the Brāhmaputra, remained much longer in the hands of the Nawābs of Murshidabād and Dacca.

The first regular settlement after the British occupation was made for a term of five years by the Committee of Circuit, which visited Dacca in 1772 A.D. This was the quinquennial

N. B.—The last Nawara lands of the Nawāb of Dacca were resumed in 1822 and of the Nawāb of Murshidabad in 1834

settlement. Estates were let out to the highest bidder without any regard to title. After this, settlements were made from year to year till 1787 A.D., when instructions were received by Mr. William Wroughton, Collector, to make a fresh settlement which would be continued for a term of years. "It is by no means our intention," observed the Board of Revenue, "to lay a heavy increase upon the country which cannot be collected without distress. All that we intend is that the jama shall be such as the Company may fairly exact and to guard against further defalcations in the revenue by collusion, fraud and misrepresentation." In conformity with these instructions Mr. Wroughton submitted his settlement proposals on the 12th February 1788. The district was then one with Noākhāli, and the joint revenue proposed was Rs. 15,57,520 as opposed to Rs. 15,43,789 of Dacca and Bākarganj. This was the decennial settlement which came into operation in Mymensingh in 1791 A.D. In 1793 it was made permanent.

The decennial settlement.

At this time the district was exceptionally backward, the Sherpur and Susung parganas among others being at most one-quarter cultivated. At first the zamindārs did not find it easy to pay the revenue fixed by Wroughton, as the histories of the parganas show. In Muhammadan times the zamindārs were frequently imprisoned and tortured for falling in arrears, and under the early English Collectors we often read of cases of their being in jail. On these occasions an Amīn would be deputed to take charge of the zamindāri. Tufton writing to the Board in 1794, anticipated that he would not be able to arrest the proprietors of Pargana Noābād, because he did not know their names, "they having given their *taahuds* in the names of their ancestors or else in the initial letters of their own, a practice in this district." In 1794 the Board in connection with the Sherpur 3 annas ordered that no zamindār should be imprisoned for arrears of revenue "provided he had landed property which if sold will be sufficient to make good the deficiency." As the result of the rapid extension of cultivation and the cheapening of money the revenue from being 70 or 80 per cent. of the landlords' gross collections became an increasingly nominal fraction of the potential assets of the estate. Whereas Akbar had fixed the revenue at one-third of the gross produce of the soil, it now barely reaches one-fiftieth of this proportion. The total rentals of all classes of landlords in the cess returns of 1908 are shown as Rs. 85,23,963, but the settlement records make them about 10 per cent. higher. Allowing for *nazar*, *hāt* and *jalkar* income, Government collects

The incidence of the land revenue in Mymensingh.

less than 8 per cent. of the gross income derived from the land by the landlords, while what the landlords receive from their tenants is certainly not more than 8 per cent. of the money value of the produce. The present revenue of 8¼ lakhs works out at between 3 and 4 annas an acre against 6 annas in Farīdpur, where, however, the Settlement Officer calculates that only 5 per cent. of the value of the crops goes to the landlords.

In 1911 there were 9,903 estates in the district classified as follows:—

Revenue.		No. of estates.	Annual demand.
Rs.			Rs.
Under 1	...	418	213
1 to 10	...	5,156	21,935
10 to 50	...	2,881	66,924
50 to 100	...	628	44,849
100 to 500	...	620	1,30,883
500 to 1,000	...	92	63,563
1,000 upwards	...	108	5,46,872

Of these 9,652 with a total revenue of Rs. 7,67,674 were permanently settled.

The estate which pays the largest demand is Pukhuria, 10 annas, Tauzi No. 122 with a revenue of Rs. 45,843. Ninety-eight estates covering three-quarters of the district are zamindāries or shares of parganas formed into separate tauzies by partition. The rest are Khārijā Tāluks, whose origin is illustrated in a despatch from Barwell, Chief of Dacca, to Warren Hastings in 1773. "While zamindārs are eaten up by harpies in their employ and cannot attend to their business personally the lands will ever be impoverished in order to force the zamindārs to partial sales until his exigencies reduce him to make a total alienation, and his estate becomes partitioned into a number of tāluks. For it is the interest of those in employ under a zamindār to bring the lands into bad condition and in such reduced state, from the funds raised by their employment, to purchase the best parcel of lands and thus from servants raise themselves to be masters." In 1804 a regulation was passed that no subordinate tenures or *Khandas* thus created would be allowed to pay a separate revenue unless registered within a year. The largest *tāluk* in the district is Bālasuti Digar belonging to the Nātor Rāj, which obtained a separate number on the Revenue Roll so recently as 1909 after litigation with the owners of pargana Pukhuria which had continued over a century.

Permanently settled Estates.

The tāluks of Tappe-Hazrādi were recognised by Government as separate estates on the application of the descendants of Isā Khān. They were given a permanent *mālikānā* of Rs. 3,529 *sikka* in lieu of their zamindāri rights. Most of the *khārijā tāluks* are to be found in the Netrakona and Kishorganj subdivisions, being most numerous in parganas, which remained for any time in the hands of Muhammadan families.

Bējabēdā tāluks are *khārijā tāluks* whose separate registration after being allowed by the Collector was vetoed by the Board. They have their own tauzi numbers in the Collectorate and pay their revenue direct into the Treasury, but remain liable if the parent estate falls into arrears. Some resumed *lākherāj* properties known in the eastern parganas as *kardri* likewise pay their revenue through the nearest *khārija tāluk*.

Temporarily-settled Estates

The temporarily-settled estates number 180 with a revenue in 1914 of Rs. 80,299. They consist of accretions to permanently-settled estates in the beds of rivers, which have dried up or changed their course. *Dedra* surveys under Act IX of 1847 for assessing these areas were made in the lower part of the Jamuna by Captain Stuart in 1867 and by Babu Parbati Charan Ray, Deputy Collector, in the old Brahmaputra in 1880-82.

Resumption proceedings were also instituted on a large scale between 1834 and 1846, under Regulation II of 1819, for newly-formed *chars* in the Jamuna. As the landlords of this district have never gone in for claiming abatement of land revenue for diluvion and it was held that at the Permanent Settlement the site of the Jamuna was traversed only by insignificant streams, most of the cases were struck off as reformation *in situ*. That 37 square miles in scattered blocks are still shown on the roll of temporarily-settled estates seems to be due to the fact that the proprietors did not appeal. The maps prepared were rough plans not drawn to scale and for the most part it is only possible to make rough guesses at the area they cover.

Some temporarily-settled estates were permanently settled between 1860 and 1871 and these are known as *Daimi bandabast mahals*.

Government Estates

The number of estates owned by Government is 71 with a revenue of Rs. 31,668. The area is 20,024 acres. Most of them were purchased at auction sale in default of other bidders for one rupee. Others are island *chars* in the Jamuna taken possession of under Regulation II of 1825. Tāluk Bayard, where the Civil Station of Mymensingh is built, and the site of the Jamālpur Cantonments were bought for civil purposes.

Tappe Nikli has a revenue of Rs. 9,597. Most of the others are very unimportant, and of 18 no revenue is realised as they cannot be traced.

Khas Mahals.

Among the temporarily-settled estates and those which are the property of Government, 99 with an area of 27 square miles and with a revenue of Rs. 38,241 are held under direct management by the Collector.

Two fisheries or *jalkars* were permanently settled as separate estates. Early in the 19th century a Mr. Craig proposed to take settlement of all *jalkars* and jungles, but his petition was disallowed because he was a British subject. The Board also doubted if the Civil Courts would accept his assertion that the majority of the fisheries in navigable rivers were not shown in the old assessment papers as part of the estates on the banks. For many years they were treated so by prescription, Government taking no interest in the matter, as fisheries in navigable rivers are public property according to the English Law. In 1885 the High Court decided that the Indian Law was different, but the proceedings started in 1860 to resume 115 fisheries were struck off by the Commissioner on the ground that the river dealt with in the first case (the Kharia) was not navigable, and Government thus lost a valuable source of revenue. The proceedings covered practically all rivers except the Dhanu and section 21 (3) of Regulation II of 1819 does not allow the re-opening of such proceedings. Government has recently decided that further resumption proceedings are impracticable.*

When Mr. Le Gros was Collector, he proposed a *Kheddah* as a source of revenue and a means of mitigating the loss caused by the depredations of wild elephants.

There are altogether 1,662 revenue-free estates recorded in Register B, Part I of the Collectorate, classified as follows :—

Revenue Free Estates.

1.	Confirmed after enquiry as valid Lākherāj	43
2.	Released after summary enquiry as being under 50 bighas. These are called *W'āg-uzasti lākherāj* and there are many that have never been registered	56
3.	Redeemed by payment of ten times the annual revenue under the old Regulations	39
4.	Redeemed under the Partition Act, VIII of 1876	1,524

* No. 1288 of 4-2-1916.

Register B I was rewritten from the old Register C in which there are 169 entries, but for some reason many estates were never registered. Thus there are many valid grants which have never been entered. The largest of these is the one held by the successors of Isā Khān in Tappe Hazrādi.*

Many of the rent-free properties held under private proprietors were originally granted to the Brāhman priests of the old zamindārs or were set aside in the charge of a Shebāit for the maintenance of the worship of a god. *Brahmottars* and *Debottars* of the Hindus have their counterpart in the *pirpāl* granted for the worship of a Muhammadan saint. These are extremely numerous in Fulpur and other *thānās*. Sometimes the cultivator in charge is elected by the villagers, but more often one family passes on the managership by inheritance like any other permanent rent-free holding, and a very small share of the proceeds is devoted to charity or religion.

Subordinate Tenures.

There is not much subinfeudation in the district and tenures rarely go below the second degree. The chief titles of subordinate tenures paying rent to the landlord are :—

(1) *Shikmi Tāluks*, which is a wide term and includes those at a rent which is liable to enhancement and those of which the rent is fixed in perpetuity. The latter are usually called *Kāimi mirāsh* or *maurasi shikmi tāluks*. *Mistāk* is used of the same thing in the Joānshāhi Pargana, and *nagani jamā tāluk* in Susung.

(2) *Patni tāluks*; Reynolds, the Collector, in 1878 writes that these are very rare in Mymensingh, and it does not appear that Regulation VIII of 1819, which made the so-called *patni tāluks* of Burdwān permanent on a fixed rent, applied strictly to any tenures already in existence in Mymensingh. Subsequently, however, many tenures were styled *patni* in the sanads that created them, especially in Susung. The landlords claim that as they were created after the Permanent Settlement, the rent is not fixed in perpetuity, although as a matter of fact it has never been altered. The claim seems unjustifiable as the word *patni* was used in the documents with the very purpose of granting this privilege.

Dikhli is used in the Hazrādi Pargana to describe specific portions of a *khārijā* or *shikmi tāluk*, for which the grantee pays his fixed proportion of the revenue or rent through the original owner.

Ijārās are temporary leases of certain villages. In

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* Usually known by the case numbers, 22, 23, 24.

Reynolds' time *ijārās* were common as few of the zamindārs managed their own property. At the present day they are increasingly rare, and most of those that survive have been found in the jungly villages of Sherpur Pargana near the Gāro Hills and in the Madhupur jungle. The leases were usually only for five years and, as Reynolds says, "the practice was a great cause of litigation and the backwardness of the district. The farmer has no object in making improvements, and, in general, he has no capital to do so; his aim is to make the most he can out of the village during his short tenure of it. The state of things is best when the farm is given to the village *mandal*, who is somewhat restrained by the force of local opinion from acts of oppression and extortion. But the farmer is often one of the zamindār's *āmla*, who probably sublets the village to some unscrupulous dependent of his own; and then the unfortunate ryots are fleeced in every possible way."

A *chak* may be either a tenure or a ryoti holding. It invariably means that the rent is fixed in perpetuity. Rich ryots have been in the habit of paying a fixed sum down to the landlord in consideration of which they will continue to hold at the same rate or at the then village rate for ever. They are particularly common in Tangāil and Iswarganj.

Jimbā is a loose generic term, by which the landlords are fond of describing all kinds of tenures, especially in civil suits for arrears of rent. It binds them to nothing. Many of the tenures were granted by documents in which no rent was specified, but it was to be fixed after measurement according to the village rates. Though no term is specified the use of other words like *patni* or *chak*, and the fact that the rent once fixed has never been altered has led to the Settlement Department recording many *jimbās* as permanent tenures on fixed rent.

The other tenancies in the district are almost universally described as *jotes*. The somewhat artificial distinction between tenures and ryoti holdings introduced by the Tenancy Act made no difference to the dealings of landlords and tenants, and tenancies of 400 bighas and tenancies of two bighas continued to be created under the same form of *kabuliyat* and to enjoy the same customary rights. Thus there are a large number of families, especially in the Dewānganj *thānā*, who started as cultivators, but are now in possession of several hundreds of acres, the great bulk of which is sublet on cash rents. Some of these *jotes* could not but be recorded as tenures. In 1864 Justices Kemp and Glover classified the Patiladaha *jotes* with the *hāolās* of Bākarganj as heritable and transferable.

The estate has, however, persistently opposed the entry of permanent on the ground that the *kabuliyats* are for a term of years and that *salāmi* is paid as a condition of transfer. On the other hand new *kabuliyats* are seldom executed until long after the previous one has expired, and there are no cases of re-settlement being refused.

As the Tenancy Act made it definitely impossible for one ryot to hold under another and failed to provide any protection for tenure holders of the agricultural class, who were possessed of occupancy rights by custom, it is a matter of vital importance to these people whether they are recorded as tenure holders or ryots. Fortunately all the prominent *jotedārs* have stated in written petitions that their under-ryots enjoy under them all the rights which they themselves enjoy under the zamindār. With this admission to help the under-ryots to claim the privileges of occupancy ryots by custom under section 183 of the Tenancy Act, the Settlement Department has to some extent solved the problem by recording the great bulk of the Patiladaha *jotedārs* as settled ryots.

Ryoti holdings on a fixed rent are very much the exception. Many of those so recorded were not intended to be such, but the occupiers have taken advantage of the slackness of the landlord in not making periodical enhancements, or keeping proper papers, to claim the benefit of section 50 of the Tenancy Act.

Ryoti holdings. *Mokta jamās* are lump rentals not based on area; they are asserted by many ryots on absolutely insufficient grounds in 105 cases. They do, however, occur in the east of the district and are usually but not necessarily *mokarrari*. *Rang-jamās* are fancy rents, as a rule settlement being taken for a year only. The usual title of under-ryots is *korfa* or *chukani*. In some parts of Jamālpur *chukāni* is a form of usufructuary mortgage. The usual expressions for usufructuary mortgages are *jaisuddhi*, *daisuddhi*, *khāi khalāsi*, *garbhi*. *Khāi khalāsi* means that after the land has been held for a certain number of years both the interest and principal of the original loan are cleared off. *Daisuddhi* and *garbhi* mean that the land is held in lieu of interest only, so long as the loan is not repaid. Both forms are very common. Ordinary mortgages or *rehān* are not common.

Produce-paying tenants have been dealt with in the chapter on the material condition of the people. *Dhānkarāri* or those paying a fixed number of maunds of rice are not common, *bargadars* paying half or occasionally one-third of the produce

actually reaped are extremely numerous. Reynolds found *bargā* agreements, which are seldom in writing, a fruitful source of unsatisfactory litigation. Recent experience is that the division of the produce gives rise to remarkably few disputes.

In 1878 very few of the ryots executed *kabuliyats*. They are now the rule rather than the exception. The long preamble contains many conditions in archaic language, which are never intended to be acted on, and the ryot has never any hesitation in denying his signature or mark, or in saying that they were exacted by force.

System of rent collection.

In the time of the Mughal Emperors, every village had its *mandal* and *patwāri*. They acted as the agents of the zamindārs not only in collecting the revenue, but in all communications between the Imperial Government and the people. Kanungos were officers of Government associated with the zamindārs for the purpose of checking and controlling their proceedings. The permanent settlement gave the *patwāri* system its death blow and, as Government lost its hold over the zamindārs, the Kanungo's inspection was set at nought.*

For many years the *patwāries* continued to collect the rents for the landlords, but they were very irregular in their payments and the Civil Court files were full of cases in which the *patwāri* had to be sued for the rendering of accounts or *Nikās*. In some estates there are still a few specially privileged or *huzuri* tenants, who are allowed to pay their rents direct to the landlord.

Relations of landlords and tenants.

Taken all round the relations between the landlords and ryots are not at all bad, though both sides profess to look on the other with considerable suspicion and jealousy. It is a long time since the oppression of zamindārs led to the wholesale desertion of villages by their inhabitants such as Bayard reported in 1791 for the Mymensingh and Jafarshāhi parganas, and for Atia, where "out of the 1,400 mauzas of which the richest zamindāri is his district was composed, 500 only were in a state of cultivation.

Throughout the 19th century false criminal cases were the chief instrument in the hands of the landlords for browbeating the tenants, but the tenants soon learnt to combine and then the landlord was powerless, unless he could bribe the *māthbars* to forsake the common cause. It may be many years yet before the ryots realise their full rights under the Tenancy

* Select Committee, House of Commons Report.

Act, and in the meantime they submit to all the exactions which have the sanction of custom without a murmur. Nevertheless in essentials, whatever is the case in the rest of Bengal, in this district the tenants are the masters of the situation.

It may be interesting to summarise here the chief sections of the Tenancy Act which are constantly ignored in the district.

Ways in which the Tenancy Act is ignored.

(1) Section 58. Rent receipts are often not given. When given, they are often incomplete, not specifying the total area or the total rent. Successful prosecutions are difficult, because the landlord always says that the tenant has refused to accept the *dākhilā*. The ryots have an unreasonable, but not unnatural, objection to accepting a *dākhilā* in cases of rent disputes, which specifies an area less than that actually held. On the other hand if the landlord substituted the settlement area, it would be construed as an admission that the rent paid corresponded with an area larger than that shown in his own *jamabandi*. Instead of granting a printed *dākhilā*, when the first kist is paid, the landlord usually gives strips of paper called *rokas* for each instalment, and only when the rent is paid in full, substitutes a *check* from his counterfoil receipt book. The *rokas* are all that most ryots have to show as proof of payment and are almost worthless as evidence, as they do not show the total rent or the amount that is paid as arrears and for the current demand. It would be easier for the executive to enforce the section, if there was a penalty for not giving receipts for *nazar* and other payments, which are not illegal.

(2) Section 74. Some or all of the following *abwābs* are realised in nearly every village.

(*a*) *grāmkharcha*, or collection expenses, to the *āmla* at 1 anna, 2 annas or 8 annas of the rent. In some cases a large percentage goes to the zamindār himself.

(*b*) *Ijārādāri*, in cases where collections are made by temporary lease-holders, from 8 annas to 4 annas in the rupee may be added to the rent.

(*c*) *abwābs* in the shape of contributions to schools and dispensaries maintained by the landlords are common in the Tangāil subdivision.

(*d*) The most common form of *abwāb* in the eastern part of the district is the realisation of cess at 2 annas in the rupee.

(3) Section 48. The rent paid by under-tenants is often double the rent paid for the same lands by the ryot instead of the legal maximum of 50 per cent. more. It is difficult to

reduce the rents, because the ryot will assert he has sublet his best lands, for which he is paying the highest rate, and even where the entire tenancy has been sublet and the law clearly broken, to enforce the section would mean the eviction of many under-tenants.

(4) Section 29. When rents are enhanced, 3 annas or 4 annas used to be a more common figure than 2 annas. The 5 annas per *pakhi* which the Gauripur and Ramgopālpur landlords tried to exact throughout Jafarshāhi in 1905-1908, worked out at 6 annas. Landlords are more careful now.

N.B.—There has never been a case under section 75 for recovery by a tenant of double the amount illegally exacted by the landlord.

(5) Section 188. Co-sharer landlords, whose lands are still *ijmāli*, act independently in numerous ways.

(6) The right of produce-paying tenants to the status of settled ryots is ignored.

In no part of the district has the right of occupancy ryots to transfer their holding been legally recognised. They cannot cut down valuable trees without the consent of the landlord, and they have to pay heavy *nazar* for the privilege of excavating a tank. Sometimes the area so used is not assessed to rent afterwards. Privileges of tenants.

In the eastern villages, where *boro dhān* is grown, the ryots are usually allowed to grow their seedlings on the landlords' *khās* lands. Even when the same tenant uses the same plot year after year, he does not pay any rent. But unless the landlord allowed the higher lands to be used for this purpose, he could not lease *bil* lands at their present high rates.

The privilege of a lump reduction called *anugraha kami* from the rent of individual ryots, as assessed upon the area measured at the village rates, is common all over the district but especially in Alāpsingh. In Atia Pargana one-fifth of the area, or 1½ *gandas* in a *pākhi* are not assessed to rent at all. This concession is called *saraha kami*, and, if it was necessitated by the depradations of the Mughal armies marching through Pakulla, is confirmation of the theory that this was once the trunk road from Delhi to Dacca.

The units of land measurement still prevalent in the district were described in detail in Reynolds' Gazetteer. In Alāpsingh, Bhawāl and Ran Bhawāl the pura of 100 *gaj* by 100 *gaj* with a *hāt* of 25½ inches measures 1·03 acres. In Tappe Sātsikha, the part of Alāpsingh north of the Brahmaputra, as in Sherpur the *kur* is used. The *hāt* varies, but 21 inches is right for most villages and then the *kur* is exactly an acre.

In Jafarshāhi, Pukhuria, Kāgmāri, Atia, Barabāzu, *i.e.*, all over Tangāil and the south of Jamālpur, the *pākhi* of 30 *karas* or 7½ *gandas* is the unit. Six *nals* by five *nals* made a *pākhi* but the number of *hāts* in the *nal* varies from 14 to 17 and the number of inches in the *hāt* from 18 to 23. So the *pākhi* may be anything between ·221 and ·521 of an acre.

In Mymensingh, Susung, Hosenshāhi, Khāliajurī and Nasirujīāl the *ārhā* is 1½ or 1¼ ācres. The big *kāni* of Joānshāhi consisting of 24 *nals* by 20 *nals* equals an acre. The small *kāni* of Hazrādi of 12 *nals* by 10 *nals* only comes to one-third of this. In some villages adjoining Sylhet it is called a *kedārā*.

In view of the recent report of the weights and measures commission it is interesting to note that Reynolds recorded his opinion that these confusing and anomalous measures would never be swept away, so long as legislation on the subject was merely permissive.

The Bengali year of which the 1st *Baisakh* 1323 corresponds with 14th April 1916 is used in all vernacular papers. Susung pargana is remarkable in having an era of its own. The year commences in *Aswin* instead of in *Baisakh* and the reckoning is a year and a half in advance of the ordinary Bengali era. Thus the month of *Baisakh* 1321 B.S. answers to *Baisakh* 1322 of the Susung era; but the Susung year 1323 begins on the 1st *Asin* 1321 B. S. Mr. Reynolds was not able to find out when this era was first introduced; it is traditionally said to be of very great antiquity, and it is certainly recognised in *sanads* dating from a period anterior to the introduction of the English dominion into Bengal.

The district was mapped by Rennell in 1778 together with the rest of Bengal. Large scale maps exist in the India Office, but the largest scale available out here is 5 miles to the inch. These maps differ in value, some of the rivers having been marked according to the oral reports of various subordinates.

The *thākbast* map was made in 1854—1856 and the Revenue Survey in 1855—1857. The *thāk* maps of many villages agree extraordinarily well with their present boundaries and in spite of cases where the boundary has failed to meet, they can be relied on in the great majority of instances to show the lands or *chaks* which belonged to the different tauzis then in separate existence. The Revenue Survey is on the scale of 4 inches to the mile except for the Madhupur jungle which is on the scale of 2 inches. The village maps

were arranged and numbered according to parganas, not according to thanas or subdivisions. Hence the Revenue Survey maps of some villages now in Mymensingh are with the Collectors of other districts like Pabna, Rangpur and Tippera. In other districts the 4 inch maps were congregated. For this district the only congregated maps are the 1 inch pargana maps. The *thāk* maps are usually 16 inches to the mile, but sometimes 20 inches and 8 inches.

For certain villages in Alāpsingh and Pukhuria parganas the Revenue Surveyors also made 16-inch maps called *khasra*, which showed fields as well as *chaks*. Some of the Mymensingh specimens are nearly as accurate as the now cadastral maps.

The district settlement began in the spring of 1908, 70 square miles of Dewānganj *thānā* being chosen as an experimental area. The village records will take up 16 lakhs of *khatians* or pages, and will require 25,000 bound volumes. The 16-inch sheets number 11,470, and, in all, over a million reproductions will have to be made.

Khatians and maps have been issued free to all concerned and many of the landlords have bought extra copies. There is an increasing tendency to produce *khatians* before the civil and criminal courts, and it is probable that Government officers will find it convenient as a rule to rely on the copies in the hands of the parties rather than to search out what they require in the extra bound copies that have been stored up for their use.

Hitherto the information available about estates in the collectorate, apart from the *thāk* maps, was incomplete and difficult to handle. There is a *jamā-wāsil-bāki* of the estates in Mymensingh in the Noākhāli collectorate, which is anterior to the Permanent Settlement.

The quinquennial papers dated 1200—1202 are in Bengali and give the gross assets of estates mauza by mauza with their areas. There are no papers of the Decennial Settlement, only some *tahoods* or *dowls* in Persian or Bengali dated 1198—1209. The *Taidads* dated 1202 give lists of revenue-free properties included in revenue-paying estates. The *Altamagha* is a similar document for *Bādshāhi* grants.

The *Sarahaddabandi* papers prepared by kanungos under Regulation IV of 1808 were copied into registers in 1874. They give the local measure in use in each village, the rates of rent, the boundaries, the names of proprietors and remuneration of patwāris, etc.

The *Hakiatbandi* Registers prepared in 1851-1852 are also Parganawār. They show all new estates created since the Quinquennial Settlement and are valuable as showing both the quinquennial and the present tauzi number.

The first general registers were opened in 1896; ignoring parganas they keep one alphabetical series of estates for the whole district. These are the old B registers and the counterpart for revenue-free and redeemed estates was the old C Register. The Mutation or Entakāli registers maintained between 1837 and the passing of the Land Registration Act contain some valuable information. The present D Register showing the names and shares of the proprietors of each estate is very far from being accurate or up to date, and the C or mauzawar register showing the area of each estate village by village was not too carefully drawn up. The B register of revenue-free estates is even more unsatisfactory.

CHAPTER XI

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

ON the grant of the Diwāni to the East India Company in 1765, Mymensingh as well as Tippera was included in the "*Iktimam* of Dacca Jalālpur". Tippera and Noakhāli were constituted a separate revenue charge in 1781 under the designation of Dhulua. In 1786 Mymensingh was made a separate Collectorate under H. Burrowes, but the seat of administration remained at Dacca.

In 1787, as the result apparently of a protest from the Directors at home against the growing costs of administration, and also with the idea of levelling up the collections of the respective Collectorates, John Shore, on behalf of the Board of Revenue, submitted a minute for reducing the number of the Collectorships in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from 35 to 23. This minute contains the interesting proposal that, as considerable reduction will take place in the revenue charges in consequence of these arrangements, some increase in the salaries of the Collectors should be recommended to the Supreme Council by granting them a commission on the net collections. At present Shore writes "it is well known that their allowances are in few places equal to their unavoidable disbursements and in general inferior to them".

Lord Cornwallis lost no time in sanctioning Shore's proposals. His letter is dated 21st March 1787. It approves of the suggestions that Collectors should be allowed commissions on the collections and goes on to say that "as one of the principal objects of the new arrangements is to unite the judicial authority in Civil cases as well as that of Magistrate in the Collectors, making the judicial authority of each co-extensive with the charge of the revenue, in future the three Adālats of Pābna, Murshidabād and Dacca, the only ones now

Hastings' salary, as Member of Council, was Rs. 300 a month. In 1757, salaries of writers increased to Rs. 400 a year which included diet money and all allowances whatever.

Travelling was very expensive. Vansittart's visit (8 months) to the Nawāb cost Rs. 28,000, including Rs. 9,442 as presents to Nawab's servants.

Clive's voyage out in 1765 cost a lakh of rupees. He gave a detailed account.

left in the Province, will have their jurisdiction confined to the local extent of the cities in which they are situated". The same orders abolished the title of Revenue Chief by which up to this time the Collectors of Dacca, Pābna, Purneah, Chittagong and Murshidabād had been known.

As the result of Shore's scheme Tippera was reunited to Chittagong, the Dacca and Bazurgomeidpur (Bākarganj) Collectorships were amalgamated under Dey, and the Mymensingh and Bhulua Collectorships under Wroughton. As Farīdpur was not then a separate district, this accounts for the whole of the present Chittagong and Dacca Commissionerships. This arrangement sounds impossible at the present day. Evidently the general idea was to leave all the country to the east of the joint Brāhmaputra and Meghna rivers with Sylhet and Tippera as the eastern boundary, under Wroughton, while Dacca faced it on the west. It appears, however, from the list of thānās proposed in 1790 that Kāgmāri, Barabāzu, Pukhuria, Jafarshāhi and Alāpsingh were all along part of Mymensingh and out of the present Tangāil subdivision only the Atia Pargana was included in Dacca. The district therefore extended from Serājganj, the head-quarters of Barabāzu on the west, to Sylhet on the east, and from the Gāro Hills to the Bay of Bengal. The addition of the Sarāil, Haripur, Daudpur and Bejrā parganas of Tippera up to 1830 still further increased the unwieldiness of the district.

Dacca, though on the wrong side of the river for the Mymensingh Collector, was not otherwise an inconvenient headquarters, as Wroughton pointed out when two years later a number of dacoities caused the Board to enquire why he resided at Dacca instead of in his own district. The Board forwarded Wroughton's reply to the Governor General, and pointed out that his district extended 200 miles from north to south.

The Governor General hereupon called upon the Board to submit a plan for making the Collectorships as compact as possible and the residence of the Collector central. The Board forwarded in reply* a long minute by their Secretary Harrington in which he discussed six principles for a new division of the Collectorships, and also recommends that Tippera should again be made a separate district with additions from the unwieldy Dacca and Mymensingh charges. They recorded their opinion at the same time that "the Governor

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* Board to Governor General, 29th October 1789

General was right in 1786, when he said that "the Collectors from the extent of their districts cannot, without a local enquiry in the several divisions, secure the regular realisation of the revenue and must be still less able to preserve the ryots and other inferior tenants from the oppressions and exaction to which they are in this country so peculiarly liable from the superior landlords and renters. The late appointment of a Commissioner to prevent the depredations of the dakaits in the Sundarbans was a proof of the present number of established Magistrates being insufficient for the preservation of the peace and good order of the community."

The Governor General* approved Harrington's first proposal which was to divide up the revenue of whole zamindāries and *tāluks* and to place geographical districts under the sole authority of one Collector, Judge and Magistrate. He, however, gave the Board permission to state their reasons if they thought that the objections to dividing the jamas of zamindāries outweighed the advantages to ryots of making the authority of the local Collector comprehensive and compact. This apparently they did, as Harrington's scheme has never been carried out in its entirety. Mymensingh itself affords a striking example, as a whole thānā of over 200 square miles (Dewānganj) is still borne on the Revenue Roll of Rangpur.

In 1790 Bhulua was separated from Mymensingh. Stephen Bayard, who had succeeded Wroughton, writes to the Board that he has found a good place for his head-quarters at Kāgdaha between Sawāra and Baiganbāri. Baiganbāri would have been chosen in preference, but for the fact that the river had already washed away part of the indigo factory premises there. The Collector did hold his office at Baiganbāri temporarily. Kāgdaha, Nāsirabād or Mymensingh, as it is variously called, has been the head-quarters since 1791.

In 1845, the Serājganj thānā was transferred from Pābna to Mymensingh. In 1866,† it was retransferred to the same district, but Dewānganj came to Mymensingh from Bogra, and Pāculla or Atia (now Tangāil) from Dacca. As the area of Serājganj was 306 square miles and that of Dewānganj 262 square miles, and that of Atia 231, the result was still further to increase the area of the district. Colonel Macdonald notified all the boundaries of the district in Notification No. 121 of 1st Administrative boundaries.

* Letter of Lord Cornwallis, 9th December 1789

† *Calcutta Gazette*, 1866, 15th February. Dewānganj was part of Rangpur at the Revenue Survey and had only been attached to Bogra for four or five years.

October 1874. In 1891 Government declared that the boundary between Mymensingh and Pabna, Bogra and Rungpur on the west side of the Jamuna should be the main stream of that river as it was found by the Collectorate kanungos after local enquiry each cold weather. The management of the Government estates in the bed of the river is not necessarily handed over from one Collector to another in consequence of this order. It was intended to settle the question of jurisdiction in criminal cases. The Sub-Inspectors on either side try to avoid enquiry in big rioting cases on the ground that the area is outside their jurisdiction, and it still happens occasionally that the Subdivisional Officers of Tangāil and Serājganj take up the same case, giving criminal justice some appearance of partiality.

Another boundary that has caused incessant trouble is that with the Gāro Hills. Until 1822, Rungpur and Goalpārā formed one district and the Gāro Hills, though not permanently settled, was a kind of appendage, in which both the landlords of Goalpārā and Mymensingh were trying to collect cesses and to establish the usual zamindāri rights.

The disputes about the boundary came to a head in 1857, and after passing through the local Revenue and Civil Courts, went to the High Court who, in 1868, passed a partial decree in favour of the Susung Rājā. Government appealed to the Privy Council, but before the Privy Council could give a decision, Act XXII of 1869 excluded the Gāro Hills from the jurisdiction of Civil, Revenue and Criminal Courts.

This Act abolished all zamindāri rights in the villages north of the Revenue Survey line of Mymensingh and the Susung Rāj received 1½ lakhs as compensation. The sum was probably not inadequate at the time, but the estate now regrets the bargain, maintaining that the jungle and *kheddah* rights, which they then lost, were the most profitable part of their pargana.

It follows that as far as the original Gāro Hills is concerned, that is from the Bhogāi river eastwards to Sylhet, the administrative boundary of the districts and the line of proprietary title coincide. In 1875, however, about 259 square miles of the permanently-settled pargana of Karāibāri in the district of Goalpārā was transferred to the Gāro Hills, with the result that from the junction of the Rungpur, Goalpārā and Mymensingh districts round the south-western corner of the present Gāro Hills district to the Bhogāi, the boundary was not touched by Act XXII of 1869. The Revenue Survey of Goalpārā is

1852—1855 was on the 1 inch scale and those of Rungpur and Mymensingh in 1855—1857 on the 4 inch scale and there are many gaps and overlappings. Badgley's demarcation in 1876 did not follow either line exactly, and it was impossible to decide the disputes which arose between the tenants of the rival landlords. Eventually in 1903 the Chief Commissioner of Assam decided that the Goalpārā Revenue Survey was the right boundary on the west and the Mymensingh Revenue Survey on the south. Mr. O'Donel demarcated the Revenue Survey of Goalpārā as far as Pahādurakātā Hāt in 1905, and for this small portion the Revenue Survey of Goalpārā was notified as the legal boundary in March 1912.

The principle adopted by the Revenue Surveyors throughout the whole boundary was to include all flat agricultural lands in Mymensingh even at the expense of including certain outlying *tilās* or hills also. Some of the northern villages of Mymensingh are almost entirely hill and jungle and many of the pillars stand on the slopes of quite high cliffs.

Jamālpur was created a separate subdivision in 1845 out of the Serājganj, Hājipur, Pingna and Sherpur thānās. As the result of the changes in district boundaries in 1866, Atia and Dewānganj thānās were substituted for Serājganj. Kishorganj with its present boundaries was made a subdivision in 1860. Jamālpur included about two-fifths of the district and became entirely unmanageable. In 1867 Government sanctioned the scheme for the existing five subdivisions. Subdivisions.

In 1914 their area and population stood as follows :—

		Area. Sq. miles.	Population.
Sadar ...	...	1,822	1,185,330
Jamālpur	...	1,233	813,306
Tangāil ...	...	1,061	1,049,772
Kishorganj	...	985	822,719
Netrakona	...	1,148	655,295

Thānās were established in 1817, when Mr. Thomas Packenham was Collector. In 1823 there were 12 and in 1862 14. Though their names and sites changed in some cases, *e.g.*, Futtehpur instead of Kendua, Pingna instead of Gopalpur, Nikli instead of Kishorganj, in the main they corresponded with the 19 revenue thānās dealt with by Chandra in preparing his jurisdiction list in 1903—1907. Since then the temporary outposts have been converted into independent police thānās. and the process is still going on. Thānas

The impossibility of keeping Mymensingh much longer as one district has been admitted over and over again. In the days of the Mughal Emperors, the *Nāib Nāzim's* functions as described in Stirling's letter to Government, "were to chastise the turbulent, to protect the weak and the mālguzars, to administrate justice to complainants according to Muhammadan law, to be cautious that no one should sell to ill-disposed persons lead, powder, or any implements of war, collect revenues and maintain establishments of war and boats (nawāra)."

In reality most of these duties were only nominally discharged and the zamindārs were granted *jāgīrs* for disposing of civil and criminal cases. Only appeals went to the *Kāzis* and *Misadēls*, who were the lieutenants of the *Nāzim*. The latter also had a regular council to assist him, consisting of *Kaziul Quzzat* (Chief Justice), a *Mufti or Pandit* (Legal Remembrancer), a *Daroga a-adalat* (Registrar) and a *Muktāsih* (Police Magistrate).

After the English took over the Diwāni in 1765, one official took charge both of the revenue (*huzuri*) and the *nizāmat*, or criminal and civil justice, but the control of the criminal courts and the police was still left in the hands of the Muhammadan officials From 1776—1781 there was a Provincial Council at Dacca, and after that the Collector of each district was in charge of the whole administration. In 1793, Mymensingh was given a Judge of its own. In 1820, there were 5 English Judges at Dacca for appeal and circuit, and Shakespear was Superintendent of Police for the whole of the Dacca, Murshidabād and Pābna Divisions. The first Superintendent of Police for Mymensingh alone was appointed in 1864.

In 1867, there were two Munsiffs at Sadar, one at Atia, Bājitpur, Sankanda (Fulpur), Sherpur, Sambhuganj (3 miles from Sadar), Netrakona, Nikli and Jamālpur.

There are now 18 Munsiffs and 4 Subordinate Judges as well as 2 and sometimes 3 District and Sessions Judges.

The Executive staff has undergone corresponding development. Up to the first partition there were often only 2 European officials in the district. Since 1905 there has usually been an Additional Magistrate, 3 European Policemen, and Civilian officers in most of the subdivisions. Nevertheless the volume of work has gone on increasing and the District Administration Committee of 1913 quotes the Collector of Dacca to prove the impossibility of the present conditions.

"As matters stand at present, we are neglecting the work which matters most, because neglect does not show and is

order that we may do work which is intrinsically of no greater importance, but which must have the preference, because it comes more immediately to the notice of Government. It is because the mass of the people are so submissive to authority and cherish the belief that British Government desires to do justice, that they do not make their voice heard, when the District Magistrate fails to save them from such delay in obtaining justice in the criminal courts as amounts to a denial of justice, because he has no time to control the works of the courts; when he fails to give a fair price for homesteads because he has no time to control the work of the Land Acquisition Deputy Collector: when he allows the holdings of *Khas Mahal* ryots to be sold and fall into the hands of mahājans, because he exercises no control over collections and allows alternations of slackness and undue severity; when he fails to redress the grievances of ryots in Wards' estates, because of the volume of complaints and the passive resistance of estate subordinates."

So long ago as 1876 the partition file opened with proposals to make Jamālpur and Tangāil a separate district with head-quarters at Jamālpur. In 1884 the scheme was again discussed, and in 1899 it came up in connection with Mr. Savage's enquiry on the notoriety of the district for outrages on women. He thought it impossible for one Superintendent of Police or Magistrate to keep an eye on 6 Inspectors and 75 Sub-Inspectors. In 1908 it was proposed to have two districts each with their head-quarters at Mymensingh. The recent committee have recommended three districts with head-quarters at Mymensingh, Gopālpur and Kishorganj.

The following table gives some indication of the difference in work between Mymensingh and Rungpur, except the 24-Parganas the nearest in size and population to Mymensingh of those districts which have not been recommended for partition :—

	Mymensingh	Rungpur.
Sessions cases	156	36
Magistrate's cases ...	11,894	2,696
Civil suits	54,616	31,121
Schools	160	54
Primary schools ...	2,352	1,205
Estates	9,955	681
Separate accounts ...	7,626	526
Letters received ...	21,353	9,426

In 1912 there were 403 Pleaders and barristers and 384

Mukhteārs and 96 Revenue Agents. The days have long since passed when it was possible to adopt Shaistā Khān's system and to put a premium on quick disposal by placing both plaintiff and defendant in jail until the case was decided.

In Jamālpur and Sadar, the Honorary Magistrates do quite a fair share of the petty criminal work. In Sherpur the Rāi Bāhādur Rādhā Ballabh Chaudhury has for a long time held powers not only to sit singly but to take complaints. The Rāi Bāhādur Chāru Chandra Chaudhury now has the same powers, and in consequence the Sherpur and Nālitabāri thānās almost form a separate subdivision and throw very little work on the Subdivisional Officer of Jamālpur. There are benches of Honorary Magistrates at Sadar, and, in addition to those at the subdivisional head-quarters, Honorary Magistrates sit at Bājitpur and Bhairab.

Crime. The morality of the district as regards women is generally low, and Mymensingh was for a long time notorious for the prevalence of such crimes as rape, kidnapping and abduction. "The *nika* system of marriage in Mymensingh district tends to multiply offences of this class, while the absence of any general registry of marriages and divorces prevents proof being had of the facts necessary to support the charges in Court." Since Reynolds gave this explanation of the evil reputation of the district for serious crime, Muhammadan Registrars of Marriages or *Kāzis* have been established by Government. Even under this system, the validity of many marriages must be doubtful, and, when the girl is taken away by a rival suitor, a case of kidnapping is often put in as a cheap means of settling the validity of the marriage. Similarly in rape cases the woman, usually a widow or a married woman, is often a consenting party, and the cases are brought to establish the honour of the family only when the intrigue becomes a public scandal.

As late as 1899, five special Inspectors were appointed to investigate cases of female outrage, but they were abolished in the following year. In 1899 Mr. Savage, then Member of the Board, was placed on special deputation. At the present day there is no reason to suppose that violent outrages on women are more common than in other districts inhabited chiefly by Muhammadans. It is possible that as Mr. Commissioner Abercombie wrote in 1861 they were increased in the past by false cases encouraged by the severity of the sentences awarded to genuine offenders.

At present burglary is by far the most common form of crime, and rioting, abduction and murder follow in the order named.

The great majority of the petty criminal cases have their origin in land disputes, although they often appear under the guise of rescuing cattle from the pounds or petty assaults. What Reynolds wrote in 1872 in this connection is equally true to-day, though the District Settlement is gradually introducing the very improvements he suggests :—

"The number of complaints before the Magistrate of criminal trespass, forcible ploughing up of lands, forcible cutting of crops, etc., is very great, and shows that much uncertainty exists among tenants themselves as to their actual rights and the boundaries of their holdings. The first step towards an improvement in this respect would be the abolition of those absurd and unintelligible papers known as Zamindāri Chithas, and the introduction of a proper system of Khasrah measurement. The Bengal ryot is not so lawless a character; and I believe it will be found in most cases of alleged criminal trespass that both parties were acting in good faith, each believing himself to be entitled to the land. If, however, holdings were properly measured and recorded, this would be impossible; and I do not see why the Legislature, which requires that a lease shall be given to the cultivator, should not also require that the lease shall contain a distinct specification of the lands to which it refers. Such a provision would be a benefit to both the tenant and the landlords.".

From the time of the Sanyāsies dacoities in the river districts have been a serious blot on the administration. In a letter of 16th December 1813, T. H. Ernest, Esq., wrote that the most stringent measures were employed to put a stop to dacoities. *Goyendahs* were empowered to take hundreds of people on suspicion and to hang scores of them by way of example without any form of trial. Considering the accessibility by water of Mymensingh traders' houses and shops, their unprotected nature, and the timidity of the peaceful population, it is strange that dacoities do not play a larger part in the criminal history of the last century. In 1905, two gangs which had committed over 60 dacoities with Badla and Madhupur as the centres of their activity were broken up. Cases of this nature, however, are not the burden on the administration that they are in Bihar.

In the year 1866 the Abroo Gāros of three villages, to whom the Susung Rājā with the idea of forcing them to pay rent had

closed all *hāts* and ordered all his ryots to refuse supplies, made raids across the boundary and committed many murders. Mr. C. G. Baker, V. C., the Deputy Inspector-General, and Mr. Reily, the Superintendent of Police, took out a force of 150 men and demanded the surrender of the guilty villagers. When this was refused and the police advanced, a stone shoot was released and Reily and several of his men were hurled down the *khud* and severely injured.

The first political case in the district was a sequel to the rioting at Jamālpur in 1907. The Superintendent of Police and the Subdivisional Officer were fired at from the temple in the Gauripur cutchery, where the Muhammadans were besieging the Hindu Volunteers who had interfered in the *mēlā*. The first political dacoity occurred in Police-station Bājitpur, when some youths of the *bhadralog* class gained admission into the house of a *tā'ukdār* by pretending to be police officers.

Political cases.

In 1911, Sub-Inspector Rāj Kumār Ray of the Criminal Investigation Department was shot dead in the Mymensingh town. Five bullet holes were found in his back. Some smaller dacoities intervened, and then in 1913 over Rs. 9,000 was looted at Dhuldia and Rs. 18,000 at Kedarpur from the house of a Shāhā. In both cases villagers were killed. In August of the same year Inspector Bankim Chandra Chaudhury was killed by a bomb in his house in Mymensingh. The bomb was of the same type as those used in the Midnapore and Delhi cases. In the autumn of 1915 Deputy Superintendent Babu Jatindra Mohan Ghose was the victim with his child of a particularly brutal murder. In 1914-15 there were three more cases of dacoity with murder and at Chandrakona the whole bazār was held up and four men wounded with revolvers. The booty in this case was estimated at Rs. 21,000. Two informers have been shot near Bājitpur.

Revenue.

The receipts in the financial year 1914-15 amounted to about 28 lakhs, and the chief items are compared below with the collections under corresponding heads in 1821 and 1860 :—

	1914.	1860.	1821.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Stamps ...	6,16,548	2,07,675	69,210
Land Revenue ...	8,65,135	12,79,780	11,76,240
Income-tax ...	1,30,631	3,765	...
Excise ...	7,33,108	2,67,675	76,965

The general revenue of the district, including local cesses, is

about treble what it was in 1795, although land revenue has gone back. Even in the last decade there has been an increase of 60 per cent. in Excise, 70 per cent. in judicial stamps, and 95 per cent. in non-judicial stamps.

Excise was the chief source of revenue of the Dacca Viceroy in Mughal times and in the early days of the Company, when a large part of the land revenue proper went on the upkeep of the fleet and the army. But in the mofussil it had very humble beginnings. Until 1808 there does not appear to have been any Abkari Mahal in Mymensingh, and in 1813 we find a staff of 4 darogas sanctioned for Abkari collections. In 1816 the revenue decreased as owing to floods people were able to afford less spirits.

In 1816 the Collector proposed to increase the number of opium shops as the price being high (Rs. 25 a seer) much illicit opium was used. The Board agreed to his suggestion that stamp vendors should sell opium on a commission of 2 or 2½ per cent.

Ganja, as in the neighbouring districts of Dacca and Tippera is largely consumed, and in 1900 accounted for no less than one-half of the excise revenue. The license fees on country spirit, which is all imported from Dacca, amount to a lakh, and the average consumption amounts to 2 gallons for every 1,000 persons. Imported liquors are used to some extent by the richer classes, and pachwai is a favourite drink of the aboriginal tribes.

The heavy stamp revenue is due to the love of the people for litigation, which is almost their only extravagance. The increase in non-judicial stamps is accounted for by the fact that kabuliyats have only recently come into favour and the great extent to which sales and mortgages of occupancy holdings take place in this district. In 1903 there were 21 Sub-Registry offices and now there are 35. In 1914 they registered 161,057 documents and as, apart from the stamp revenue, the total receipts were Rs. 1,94,335 and the expenditure Rs. 86,907, they are a great source of profit to Government.

Up to and including Akbar's time, the *Kotwāl* was responsible for the crime in his city, town or village. At that time in the words of Akbar's minister "if any article is stolen or robbed the police must return the article, produce the offender or failing this become responsible for the equivalent." The zamindārs were responsible for the policing of their territory and appointed the *Kotwāls*. It was found, however, that they used these officers not to maintain the public peace but to Police.

plunder the people, and under British rule the Magistrates of districts gradually assumed control and appointed a number of darogas, who had under them barkandazes and village watchmen. Darogas were first appointed in 1833 and received their pay by commission, Rs. 10 for each dacoit convicted and 10 per cent. of the value of property recovered from a convicted thief. The darogas, however, soon assumed tremendous power and were as oppressive as the zamindārs had been. Various commissions were appointed to consider remedies, but nothing serious was done until effect was given to the resolutions of the Police Commission of 1860.

In 1862 the Magistrate, writing to the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, thinks that "the new plan of special officers is bound to succeed, as want of supervision due to the Magistrate's inability to find time for travelling was the main defect of the existing system, and the real source of most of the other evils, viz., bribery and corruption." He added that the salaries should be raised so as to attract a better class of men.

In this year the total cost of the police, excluding 49 guards for the Jail and 24 for the Treasury, was Rs. 27,624. By 1865 the staff had already been increased to 564 and the cost to Rs. 86,700.

In 1913 the regular police force of the district consisted of 103 Sub-Inspectors, 108 head constables and 854 constables. For supervision there was one Superintendent of Police, 1 Additional Superintendent, 2 Assistant Superintendents, 2 Deputy Superintendents, 13 Inspectors, of whom 7 were in charge of circles generally conterminous with the subdivisions, 3 in charge of Courts, 2 of political work and one of the armed branch. This works out at one policeman for every 5·7 square miles of area and 4,183 head of population. It includes the town police.

The cost was divided as follows :—

		Rs.
(*a*) Pay of Gazetted Officers ...	...	44,307
(*b*) Subordinate officers, including ministerial and hospital staff	...	1,23,508
(*c*) Head-constables and constables	...	1,22,094
(*d*) Clothing	...	6,828
(*e*) Contingencies	...	36,751

or a total of Rs. 3,33,488. There was an an additional expenditure on buildings of Rs. 58,006.

The river police have thānās at Bhairab and Nikli and the Railway Police at Mymensingh, Singhjāni and Jagannathganj.

On the average about 13 constables belonging to these special branches are stationed in this district.

In addition there is an armed reserve of 244 constables and 25 head-constables under an Inspector and 7 Sub-Inspectors, which is almost entirely recruited from Bihar and the United Provinces.

Mymensingh seems to have been the first district in which chaukidars were organised, and Mr. Evers, the Collector, received the thanks of Government in 1817 and a copy of his report was sent to all other districts. The following extracts may be of interest :—

"I do not find in any former year that it was at all usual for any person to think of informing of a robbery except the prosecutor, and that he frequently delayed in going to the thānā for 10 or 15 days. In these instances, the apprehension of offenders was next to impossible. No chaukidars had been appointed in the villages, and though regulations had been passed by Government making the zamindārs and their agents responsible for the conveyance of immediate information, the punishment for neglect had never been awarded."

"To remedy these evils, I caused landlords of all descriptions to be furnished with copies of those sections of the regulations which define their duties in aid of the police. By my direction, the landlords appointed chaukidārs in every village, whom I have not only found of great use in apprehending offenders, but also in giving information." In 1817, the Sub-Inspector of Police reports "I conclude that the expenses of this establishment is in reality (as it ought to be) defrayed by the inhabitants of the villages, but as no regulation expressly directs the general appointment of the village watchmen, I have not thought proper to interfere with the assessment. I have had no complaints from the ryots and very seldom from the chaukidārs on account of wages. The salaries are from Re. 1 to Rs. 2-8 per mensem, but many have received grants of land in lieu of allowances in money, some have both." This grant soon disappeared and by 1820 all chaukidārs were supported by their fellow villagers.

In 1838 the Police Commissioner criticised the dual control under which the system was bound to be a failure: "By a regulation of 1793, the police was under the exclusive charge of Government and all descriptions of village watchmen under the orders of the daroga. The zamindārs were responsible for apprehending criminals although deprived of all police powers and even of control over the chaukidārs. The zamindārs

unentrusted with authority but still held responsible, would of course afford no cordial co-operation. The chaukidārs required to serve two masters, nominated by and entitled to receive their pay from the one, but bound to obey, and liable to dismissal from, the other, would eventually serve neither, while the public authority is naturally hated and betrayed by both."

In 1866 McNiele reported on the rural police. The number in Mymensingh was 5,186 maintained by villagers, 26 maintained by Government, nil maintained by zamindārs.

In 1872 Reynolds writes that "this large force exists only on paper. The watchmen who are really employed, probably not one-fifth of the 5,580 nominally employed, are a very inefficient body, not seldom in league with the criminals whom it is their duty to apprehend. They are supposed to receive Rs. 4 a month each either in money or in land, but the salaries are as mythical as the men themselves."

Daffadārs most probably were first appointed in 1895, but this is uncertain. There are now 6,941 chaukidārs and 772 daffadārs in the district.

There are five jails in Mymensingh. The district jail was built for 635 prisoners, but the daily average in 1915 was more than 800. The subdivisional jails have room for from 22 to 47 persons. The convicts are chiefly employed on agriculture, including market gardening and jute growing, wheat grinding and the manufacture of mats, carpets, cane chairs and bricks.

Post Office. There are few departments in which the British genius for administration has been more successful than in its organisation of a postal service, which covers the most inaccessible villages in this overgrown district. It is estimated that three million paid letters, 4 lakhs of unpaid letters and 5 lakhs of postcards are annually delivered in this district. Rs. 1,53,568 worth of postage stamps and Rs. 22,124 of stamped envelopes were sold in 1912-13. In addition the post offices carry out an enormous business in the popular money order service, V. P. P. system and saving banks. In 1914-15, Rs. 1,43,054 of revenue and cesses was paid in 34,172 money orders and Rs. 27,924 in 1,277 rent money orders. They are now taking up an ambitious programme of life insurance, which bids fair to be as popular as the other branches.

There are 307 Post Offices and branch Post Offices in the district. The post offices are chiefly mat and thatched huts, only Rs. 10,469 having been expended on building during the years 1909 to 1914. The Post Masters in the mofussil only receive Rs. 5 pay, and many of them are uneducated. The letters are

carried by up-country coolies in relays of 5—8 miles, and it is very seldom that losses or burglaries occur. Until recently the heavy mail to and from Tangāil was carried through the Madhupur jungle at night, the journey of 60 miles only taking 18 to 20 hours, winter and summer.

Deputy Post Masters existed at the very beginning of the 19th century, but they were abolished by the Governor General in Council on the 11th October 1804, and Collectors with the official designation of Post Masters were placed in charge.

The actual management rested with the landlords, who appointed the *dāk* muharrirs and runners, and the Collector only interfered to punish instances of neglect of duty, and to enforce payment of the salaries of subordinates. By Act VIII of 1862, the Magistrate was vested with a more complete control. Funds were raised by the levy of a percentage upon all estates situated within the district, the Government revenue of which was Rs. 50 and upwards. The rate in the year 1865 amounted to 15 annas 5 pies per Rs. 100 of revenue. During the year 1863-64 the village chaukidārs were employed to deliver letters, but this plan was a failure and a regular staff of special peons was entertained from the beginning of 1865. By Government orders dated the 16th October 1865, the offices of *dāk-muharrirs* and pound-keepers were amalgamated, and the *dāk muharrirs*, with a few exceptions, received half their salaries from the Pound fund, an arrangement which resulted in considerable economy. In the same year the supervision of the executive duties connected with the zamindāri *dāk* were made over to the District Superintendent of Police.

Later the management passed into the hands of the postal department and by Eastern Bengal and Assam order of the 4th April 1906, the zamindāri *dāk* cess was entirely abolished with effect from the 1st April of that year.

The increase of business is shown by the following table :—

	1865.		1912.	
	No.	Amount in rupees.	No.	Amount in rupees.
		Rs.		Rs.
Money orders issued.	20	1,78,300	44,6668	74,05,470
Money orders paid.	491	27,340	18,2841	32,74,287

These figures do not include Tangāil. That sub-division is included in the Pābna Postal Division.

Telegrams. There are now 41 Telegraph offices open in the district, and in 1913-14, 107,743 telegrams were received and 115,670 issued at these offices. The postal and telegraph departments have been combined under the same management since 1914. The first telegraph line laid in the district was from Mymensingh to Dacca in 1883 and it was extended to Sherpur in 1885.

CHAPTER XII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

THERE are no village communities in Bengal in a true sense, and the chaukidāri *panchayat* system recognised by Act VI of 1870 is a purely artificial organisation, the unit being unions and not villages. The system has the advantage that it allows a larger choice of capable *panchayats*. The defect has been that the *panchayats* are judged by the regular payment of the chaukidāri tax and treated merely as an agency to collect money. The Police Commission of 1904 recommended that the *panchayats* should be gradually converted into village headmen and criminal cases made over to them for disposal. The system was never tried in Mymensingh and in other places the mistake was made of not giving it the special supervision, which its framers said was essential. In Mymensingh therefore Local Government is confined to the District Board, Local Boards and Municipalities.

Before the Cess Act of 1880 a District Board Committee existed, apparently based on Act X of 1871, which derived a small income from the proceeds of pounds and ferries and advised the Collector as to the upkeep of the main roads, the cost of which had hitherto been entirely defrayed by Government. Both roads and the important ferries which connected them had been considered as public property under the Mughal Government, but, as the letter of the Collector in 1791 shows, all roads being only paths they had gradually come to be treated as private property and had afterwards to be formally acquired or made over to Government by the courtesy of the landlords. The Cess Act gave to the District Board Committee the expenditure of the roads' portion of the cess

and Government contributed Rs. 1,800 annually as its share of the cost of the collection. It took away the proceeds of important ferries at the same time. Under the same Act branch road committees were established in the four subdivisions to administer small grants for village roads. The District Committee consisted of 17 members.

The present District and Local Boards were constituted under Act III of 1885. It was originally intended that the Local Board, and not the District Board, should be the unit and that unions working under the supervision of the Local Board should manage primary schools, pounds, roads, tanks, drains and sanitation, and raise their own funds and elect their own members. The Secretary of State disliked the proposals and when the Bill eventually passed, the District Board had become the unit; Local Boards have no definite position and are dependent on the charity of the District Board.

A recent Government order has made over to the District Board the whole of the roads and public works cess amounting in 1912-13 to Rs. 5,42,738-4-9 instead of half only. In spite of certain Government contributions for special purposes being withdrawn on this account a considerable increase in the income has been the result. In the financial year 1913-14 the difference was Rs. 2,21,596. At present the difficulty is to spend the money as contractors are very bad and very slow in this district, the season for burning bricks is short, and even coolies for earthwork can hardly be obtained in sufficient number.

Probably in no district are the Local Boards so effete and their meetings so lifeless as in Mymensingh. Even for the District Board it is extraordinarily difficult to get members who really contribute to its usefulness. Most of the work is done by the Collector, who has always been the Chairman. Few of the members know enough about the district as a whole to question the distribution of funds for new works proposed by the District Engineer, and their interest is usually confined to their own portion of the district. To some extent it is the long list of official agenda of a routine nature which stifles the introduction of fresh matter by private members at the meetings. An hour or an hour and a half is about all that the members like to give to a meeting, and it is seldom sufficient for the Chairman to read out and explain the 20 to 60 items, for which as a rule the sanction of the Board is only a formal necessity.

The income and expenditure of the Board in 1887-88, the

first year in which a report was issued, and in 1910-11 is compared in the following table :—

Names of major heads.	1887-88.	Percentage of total.	1910-11.	Percentage of total.
INCOME.	Rs.		Rs.	
Government contribution	1,149	·37	1,53,452	28 2
(1) Road cess ...	2,58,616	84·20	2,59,422	47·7
(2) Pounds ...	42,579	13·87	41,928	7·7
(3) Education fees and contributions.	572	·19	12,529 / 525	2·4
(4) Medical and Minor departments.	...	...	2,992	·5
(5) Miscellaneous ...	3,904	1·27	18,520	3·4
(6) Ferries ...	314	·10	55,012	10 1
Total ...	3,07,134	100	5,44,380	100
EXPENDITURE.				
(1) Management and salaries.	23,889	12·69	66,550	12·51
(2) Education ...	39,796	21·13	1,47,991	27·82
(3) Hospitals and Sanitation (Medical).	...	...	33,324	6·26
(4) Roads and Communications.	1,24,610	66·18	2,39,185	44·96
(5) Water-supply ...	...	...	44,911	8·45
Total ...	1,88,295	100	5,31,961	100

It will be seen that schools, anyhow, have not proved the source of additional income anticipated by Sir Stewart Bayley in his first resolution on the working of the new District Board in 1888. The income of the largest ferries in the district giving a revenue in 1915 of Rs. 35,035 are still appropriated by the Local Government.

The District Board runs a very successful printing press of its own and spends a net sum of about Rs. 2,500 a year from its own funds on the Kashi Kishor Technical School. This school is supposed to teach the two trades of carpenter and blacksmith to the sons of poor gentlemen in the town, and it has lately been encouraged by large orders for boat fittings and school furniture from the Board. The actual work at present is chiefly done by hired skilled labour as the apprentice pupils are irregular in their attendance and deficient in application

With good supervision, however, the venture should do well. It was started in 1893. There is also a well built Veterinary Hospital at Mymensingh in which 1,645 animals were treated in 1913. The expenditure was Rs. 1,463 and the receipts Rs. 659. A weaving school was started at Tangāil in 1912. The boys from the neighbourhood who have joined the class belong by birth to the weaving community and there are distinct hopes that the school may do something to revive the cloth manufacture that was at one time an important feature of the Tangāil and Kishorganj subdivisions, but has now almost entirely died out.

The Local Boards have no income of their own apart from what is allowed by the District Board from its own resources. In 1912-13 the expenditure of each was as follows :—

	Roads.	Water-supply.	Management.	Total.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Jamālpur ...	4,380	5,622	1,502	11,504
Tangāil ...	6,054	8,455	1,461	15,970
Kishorganj ...	5,216	10,898	1,348	17,462
Netrakona ...	4,956	2,461	1,509	8,926
Sadar ...	7,571	3,995	1,647	13,213

The District Board has naturally been much handicapped by the size of the district and the large number of rivers and *bils*, which make an enormous number of bridges necessary. Except at ruinous cost it is impossible to make the waterways on most of the important roads sufficient with the result that in the rains the embankments are washed away and new breaks are always occurring. These breaks are a great nuisance even in the cold weather, for the water is insufficient to float a proper boat, and even over the big rivers, where boats to carry carts and horses are kept, the rivers fall and rise so quickly that it is difficult to maintain proper landing *ghāts*, and passengers may have to wade long distances through shallow water to reach the boats. The District Engineer has a most disheartening task in trying to overcome all these natural difficulties over such an extended area, and the bamboo bridges, which he puts up in the cold weather to help foot-passengers, never last long and are sometimes almost dangerous to life and limb.

Another difficulty is that there is no stone at all available

in the district and the *pukka* roads are made of brick. The surface quickly crumbles into a most obnoxious red dust, and they require complete relaying every two or three years. There are now about 54 miles of *pukka* roads in the district which cost Rs. 48,247 to maintain, so that out of 950 miles of road in the district maintained by the District Board these 54 cost 49 per cent. of the total sum available for maintenance.

The villagers have a bad habit of making small cuts in the road to release the water whenever it shows signs of flooding their own fields. In the rains and cold weather, when every field is covered with rice, jute, or mustard crops, the District Board roads often afford the only grazing available for cattle, and cows and goats are tied with long ropes along the sides at frequent intervals to the great danger of travellers riding or bicycling at any pace.

The District Board offices at head-quarters are substantial buildings. Government does not maintain any *dâk* bungalows in the mofassil even in the subdivisions, and the bungalows maintained by the Board compare very unfavourably as regards materials and fittings with those maintained by the Public Works Department in Assam. They are indispensable to all touring officers especially in the season when it is impossible to live in tents, or indeed to cart tents about. At present they number 26 and mostly consist of two rooms with mat walls and tin roofs, in some cases covered by thatch. Those at Kishorganj, Netrakona, Tangāil and Gafargāon have *pukka* walls, and four new ones entirely *pukka* have recently been sanctioned. There is no doubt that the number could be increased with advantage.

Pounds are managed by the Local Boards. They number 355. The income in 1915 was Rs. 40,971 and the expenditure Rs. 4,285. Even from the start it appears that they were a popular institution, as the returns of 1866 show that nearly 60 animals were impounded daily throughout the year. April is the month in which the largest number of animals are impounded, and the number is smallest in August.

When Reynolds was Collector the town of Nasīrābād was the only place in the district which possessed a Municipality. The inhabitants applied to Government in the year 1857, praying for the extension of Act XXVI of 1850 to the town. After the usual notices and proclamations, the Act was formally introduced in July 1858 and a Code of Rules for working the Act was framed and approved by Government. The Act at first did not work well, and in June 1859 a number of the

Municipal Institutions.

inhabitants applied to Government to have it suspended. The main cause of dissatisfaction was the inequality of the assessment, and this was remedied by various rules passed at a meeting of the Commissioners on the 14th July 1859.

Funds were raised under the Act by the levy of the following taxes :—

1. A tax on houses and buildings at an average of two annas per month and not exceeding Rs. 2, the same being paid by the occupier. Public buildings, temples, etc., were exempted as well as empty houses.

2. A tax of two pice upon every loaded cart and of one pice upon every loaded bullock entering or leaving the town.

3. A tax of one anna upon every elephant entering or leaving the town, or of one anna daily upon every elephant kept within the town.

The house tax was assessed by a *panchāyat* of seven persons. The members were appointed by the Commissioner, but on the occurrence of a vacancy, it was usual for the remaining members of the *panchāyat* to fill up their numbers.

The following is the annual statement of the Municipal Fund for the year 1865-66 :—

Receipts.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Balance in hand ...	191	2	5
House tax collections ...	1,317	2	9
Tax on carts	73	11	0
Fine	0	12	0
Sale of municipal stones ...	51	12	0
Received for hire of municipal carts	105	5	6
Total ...	1,710	0	8

Expenditure.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Clearing drains and repairing station roads	928	10	0
Keep of municipal bullocks and drivers' wages ...	231	5	6
Tax collector's commission	13[illegible]	0	0
Pay of writer	60	0	0
Pay of chaprasies ...	48	0	0
Stationery	13	5	0
Sundries	0	12	0
Total ...	1,418	0	0

Subsequently the following municipalities were created :—

Name.	Year of establishment.	Area in square miles.	Number of elected Commissioners.	Number of nominated Commissioners.	POPULATION— In 1881.	POPULATION— In 1911.
Jamālpur ...	1st April 1869	12·7	10	5	14,727	21,100
Sherpur ...	Ditto ...	0·5	8	4	8,891	15,501
Kishorganj ...	Ditto ...	6·0	10	5	13,984	18,029
Bājitpur ..	Ditto ...	2·0	6	3	4,641	10,[illegible]
Muktagacha ..	October 1875	1·0	6	3	4,295	6,858
Tangāil ...	1st July 1887	5·25	10	5	15,848	16,866
Netrakona ...	1st January 1887.	12·17	All nominated.	...	...	13,740

The Nāsīrābād or Mymensingh Municipality has an area of 12·07 square miles and a population of 21,109 as opposed to 10,561 in 1881. In 1864 the population was only 4,295. It is the only Municipality which possesses artificial water-works. They were constructed by Māhārājā Surjya Kanta Acharjya Bāhādur at a cost of Rs. 1,42,278 in the year 1893. In 1900 the cost of maintenance amounted to Rs. 7,965-6-8. Elaborate schemes for drainage have been discussed recently for Jamālpur, Tangāil and Netrakona, but no Municipality has as yet initiated schemes for electric lighting, tramways or light railways.

The following table shows the total income and expenditure of each Municipality for 1912-13 as compared with 1880 :—

	1880.		1912.	
	Income.	Expenditure.	Income.	Expenditure.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Jamālpur	5,536	4,932	17 051	13,704
Sherpur	6,683	6.577	11,524	12,161
Kishorganj ...	3,457	3,401	9,845	10,070
Bājitpur	1.273	1.314	5,911	4,888
Muktagacha ...	...	...	9,675	9,518
Tangāil	...	...	12,620	10,848
Netrakona ...	...	...	10,247	10.979
Mymensingh ...	11,813	9,497	70,405	69,471
Total ...	...	...	1,47.278	1,41,639

The main source of income in most municipalities is the tax on buildings and in others on persons. The main expenditure in all cases is on conservancy.

In most of the municipalities large areas which are purely agricultural have been brought into the municipal areas by the original notifications purely for the purpose of widening the basis of assessment. In Jamālpur, Sherpur and Netrakona this system has had the most grotesque results, and in Netrakona the boundaries have been revised recently, so as to exclude Revenue Survey units which formed no part of the town proper and were never likely to come into it in the normal course of expansion.

The municipal commissioners are more independent than the members of the District and Local Boards, having naturally

a much closer and more personal interest in the management. They are also directly interested in the amount and nature of their own assessment. In Sherpur and Muktagācha a member of the zamindāri families is usually the Chairman, and on the whole the administration compares favourably with that of the larger municipalities.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDUCATION.

CONSIDERING its size and general prosperity the district of Mymensingh is one of the most backward in education among the districts of Eastern Bengal. There has, however, been a considerable advance in English education in recent years. Before Government took up the question, education was imparted through *Maktabs*, *Madrassas* and *Tols*, but Mymensingh never contained any of sufficient renown to attract pupils from other districts. The *Madrassa* at Mangalbāria in Katiādi was perhaps an exception, as it used to be attended by some boys from Sylhet. The education characteristic of these indigenous schools is of very little real educational value, though some improvement has lately been brought about in the *Tols* by the help of Government examinations and *Pandit* Associations. The *Madrassa* system is also undergoing reform; Persian has been omitted from the curriculum and a certain amount of English and secular subjects introduced.

The *Maktabs* and *Madrassas* mostly owe their existence to the generosity of some well-to-do village *Mathbars* and are generally presided over by half educated Maulvis from Noākhāli or Chittagong, who not infrequently end by marrying in the family of their employers and settling down in the village. In these institutions the boys are taught to read the Koran and easy books in Urdu and Persian mostly of a religious character. There are no fixed fees, but the boys generally propitiate their Maulvis by paying whatever they can, varying from a pinch of tobacco or a pail of milk to 4 and 5 annas in cash. The Maulvi gets his board and lodging free at the house of his chief employer and also supplements his means by presiding at village funerals and other religious ceremonials.

The Sanskrit *Tols* were generally situated in the house of the *Pandit*, and pupils from different villages used to come and live with him and board at his expense. The pupils used to receive their instruction free, but the *Pandits* received fixed stipends from well-to-do villagers and zamindars in cash or kind. They also derived a moderate profit from attending feasts and festivals with their pupils and *shamajik*, or honorarium, paid to the pupils by the hosts. The people as a rule

were very indulgent to the pupils of the *Tols* and allowed them to ransack the fruit and vegetables in their gardens. Although these primitive institutions were of little value from the modern educational point of view they satisfied the limited ambition of the people and were useful in their own way in teaching the boys to perform their religious observances. The acquisition of knowledge for its own sake was very rare owing to the dearth of a middle class gentry and an aristocracy of learning in the district. The founders of most of the notable families in Mymensingh were either military adventurers or Civil officers in Government employ, an aristocracy of wealth who paid little or no attention to education, with the result that unlike other districts under Muhammadan influence, wealth and not learning became the criterion of rank. Gradually, owing to the persistent efforts of the education department, education has made steady progress and a large number of schools under English-knowing masters have taken the place of the primitive *Maktabs* and *Tols*. In 1852 the control of education was transferred from the Board to a Special Council. In 1854 the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal made it known that Government intended to establish a system of vernacular schools for the rural population, and that people connected with schools who wanted assistance should make their wishes known to the Collector.

The first Middle English School in this district was started at Narāyandahar, a village in Pargana Susung, about 6 miles west of Netrakona, in January 1846, and in the month of November of that year the Hardinge School was established at Mymensingh. The Zillah School was established in the same town in November 1853, and this was followed by the establishment of the Janhabi school at Tangāil and the Donough school at Jamālpur. Within the next 20 years many schools sprang up on all sides with varying fortunes, and progress in education continued steadily.

In the year 1866-67 there were altogether 110 schools of all kinds with a total number of 3,984 pupils attending them. Of these 72 with 2,644 pupils were in East Mymensingh and 38 with 1,340 pupils in West Mymensingh. There was only one High School in that year with 284 boys on its roll.

In 1871 Sir George Campbell introduced his scheme for the improvement of primary education by which the District Board took over the financing and management of primary education in return for the income of pounds and ferries transferred to the District Board. In the course of the next 30 years

the progress in education was rapid, and the number of schools and pupils attending them increased twenty fold. In 1901 there were 2,129 schools of all grades with 59,628 pupils attending them. Of these 16 were Higher English schools with 4,797 pupils on their rolls. In that year there were two second grade Colleges in this district both teaching up to the F. A. standard of the Calcutta University with 190 pupils.

In 1914 the total number of schools had risen to 2,483 with 98,814 pupils. They are classified as follows :—

	Number	Expenditure.	Pupils.	Income from—		
				Fees.	Grants.	Subscriptions, etc.
		Rs.		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Government ..	3	47,173	1,010	16,533	30,640	...
2. High schools (aided by Government).	12	1,14,535	5,130	98,3[illegible]	10,605	6,529
3. High schools (unaided).	15	1,29,005	6,860	1,16,537	.....	12,970
4. Middle English schools.	138	2,10,118	14,710	1,72,682	12,880	24,550
5. Middle Vernacular schools.	31	15,895	9,076	9,100	5,640	1,855
6. Upper Primary schools.	127	34,002	7,068	14,477	18,267	1,718
7. Lower Primary schools	2,192	2,40,250	80,288	1,07,006	1,27,833	5,417

Of these Primary schools 814 with an attendance of 16,863 are for girls. The Vidya Moyi Girls' School at Mymensingh was opened in 1865 and now contains 210 pupils.

Twelve Upper Primary schools and 2 Lower Primary schools are chiefly maintained for the benefit of the aboriginal tribes—the Gāros, Hadis, Hajangs and Māndāis. The first Gāro school was opened at Bātigāon in 1872, but the last census still returns all but 218 out of the 40,000 animists as illiterate. The Missionaries have been the chief agents in spreading education among the primitive people at the foot of the hills. The Baptist Mission maintains a first class hostel at Mymensingh from which Gāro boys from the Durgapur area can attend the Zilla School.

In spite of this development the Census of 1911 shows that only 4·6 per cent. of the total population of four and a half million are literate, 198,285 males and 11,869 females. The smallness of the percentage is due to the Muhammadans, only 2½ per cent. of whom are educated as opposed to over 10 per cent. of the Hindus. 23,373 males and 294 females are literate in English. Of the boys of school-going age only 25 per cent. attended school and of the girls barely 4 per cent. These figures compare very badly with Bakarganj and Dacca, where 8 per

cent. and 15 per cent. respectively of the total population have some education. In Faridpur the population is half that of Mymensingh, but the number of literate persons is almost the same. In Pabna, Rangpur and the Rajshahi districts the proportion is more like Mymensingh, one in 20 or 25.

The total expenditure on education in the district of Mymensingh in the year 1910-11 was Rs. 6,42,186, of which Rs. 69,676 was contributed from the general revenue and Rs. 1,42,832 from the District Board.

College Education.

The first College in Mymensingh was the Pramatha-Monmatha College at Tangail. It taught up to the F. A. standard and was affiliated to the Calcutta University on the 27th December 1900. It only lasted ten years, but was of great service to the people of the Tangail subdivision which can now claim more graduates and under-graduates than the rest of the district. The recurring expenditure of the College amounted to about Rs. 7,000 a year and was entirely borne by the zāmindārs of Santosh who gave their name to the College. Finding more expenditure was necessary to its efficiency, the founders wisely agreed to its amalgamation with the Jagannath College, Dacca.

A year after the establishment of the Pramatha-Monmatha College, on the 18th July 1901 the City School in the town of Mymensingh was raised to the status of a second grade College as a branch of the City College at Calcutta and was affiliated to the Calcutta University in April of the following year. It was found, however, that the accommodation was insufficient to meet the increasing demands of the University Regulations, and the Calcutta Council resolved to close the College at Mymensingh and withdrew the affiliation with effect from 31st March 1908.

Babu Baikuntha Nath Chakrabarty, the Principal of the College, then sought the assistance of the Collector for reorganising the College and establishing it on a firm basis. A strong committee was formed and Government was approached for a liberal grant-in-aid. The Divisional Commissioner met the Committee in June 1908 with the result that the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam decided to contribute a sum of Rs. 55,000 towards the estimated capital expenditure of Rs. 80,000 for a new building provided the balance of Rs. 25,000 was raised by subscriptions. They also promised a recurring grant of Rs. 600. In a very short time Rs. 1,18,395 was promised, the chief subscribers being the zāmindārs, Raja Jagendra Kishor Roy Chaudhuri of Ramgopalpur, Māhārājā Kumar

Sashi Kanta Acharjya Chaudhuri, Rani Dinamani Chaudhurani and Babu Hem Chandra Chaudhuri. The College was reopened in 1908 and called the "Ananda Mohan College" after the late Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose of this district, a great educationalist and the founder of the City College.

In the year 1915 the total number of students on the rolls was 537, of whom 86 were Muhammadans. The total recurring expenditure was Rs. 42,759, of which Rs. 10,450 was the Government grant, Rs. 32,309 was realised in fees.

The history of English education in Eastern Bengal has been criticised at length in the report of the District Administration Committee published in 1914. It is certain that private English schools were allowed to multiply too quickly. While the funds at their disposal were not sufficient to provide suitable buildings and properly qualified teachers, the Committees of Management were not formed of men of large views and the University, which was supposed to control them, exercised its powers with little discrimination and thoroughness. The early choice of a career for his son does not appeal to the Bengali parent with the result that the scientific classes have had little patronage and the outturn of would-be Government officials and lawyers exceeds the demand, whereas the recruits to technical and engineering Colleges are too few.

There is still a sufficiency of employment for all persons properly educated especially in the Education Department where good teachers are urgently wanted, but for the partially educated Hindus of the *bhadrālok* class the prospects are increasingly gloomy. If the enormous profits on jute in the last decade failed to tempt them to take to cultivating their own lands, there is little opportunity now that the Muhammadans have acquired occupancy rights in most of the lands and their new born educational keenness is bringing them into the field as rivals in all departments.

As early as 1866 there was a printing press at Mymensingh which produced a weekly paper called the *Biggaponee.* The *Charu Mihir* at Mymensingh is the only periodical now published in the district. Some of the Sherpur and Kāgmāri zāmindars have produced literary works of some merit, but the district cannot boast of any well known authors and most of the works published at the numerous local presses are pamphlets and cheap handbooks of very passing interest and importance.

CHAPTER XIV.

GAZETTEER.

Adampur.—There is an *ākhra*, or Vaishnavite monastery, supported by the contributions of the Kaibarttas. There is another at Dilli-ākhra, in a fair-sized wood of hijal trees not far from Bithangal, which was founded by Narāyan Gosāin, a member of the Jagomohini sect.

Alapsingh.—Alāpshāhi was one of the 22 parganas which Isā Khān received at the hands of Akbar the Great after the battle of Mughalmāri. It consists of two parts, viz., Tappe Sātsikkā lying on the north of the Brāhmaputra and having the same local unit of measurement as the Sherpur pargana and Tappe Kumaria, where the unit is the pura, comprising most of Fulbaria, Muktagācha and Mymensingh thānās south of the river. At Todar Mal's settlement, the revenue was Rs. 1,90.161. At the Permanent Settlement it was fixed at Rs. 65,393, the depredations of wild elephants, which had caused an intermediate reduction in the time of Warren Hastings, having by this time become less severe.

The Jangalbāri family soon lost the majority of Isā Khān's possessions. Alāpshāhi and Momin Shāhi fell to the share of Mahamad Mendi of Tikara in Atia. In 1721 Alāpsingh was in the hands of two Hindu families, Binod Rām Chandra of Lukia in pargana Barabāzu having 10 annas and the Rays of Puthijāni 6 annas. They allowed the revenue to fall in arrears and eventually resigned in the fear of further personal indignities at the hands of Murshid Kuli Khān, Nawāb of Murshidābād. This prince died shortly afterwards, and Srī Krishna Acharjya, the founder of the present family of the Muktagacha zamindārs, got a grant of the zamindāri from Alivardi Khan in 1727 in return for military assistance against his brother. Srī Krishna traced his descent from Udayrām Acharjya, a prominent Barendra Brahman. He had already obtained settlement of Taraf Jhakar in the Sailbāsha pargana of Bogra from Murshid Kuli Khān on the death of the proprietress, whose interests he had represented at the Nawāb's Court against a fraudulent ijāradar, Kumar Singh. His new

zamindāri was obtained on easy terms as he bribed the Nawāb's Kanungo, Ganga Rām Ray, to make a false report of its resources in return for a tāluk in the four best mahāls of the pargana. The khārija tāluks of the Tarash family in Bailar and Kalibazāil are the results of this bargain.

Srī Krishna had four sons who transferred their headquarters from Bogra to Bahādurpur and afterwards to Muktagācha, about 1750. Tradition says that a smith of the place named Muktaram presented Rām Rām with a brass *gachha* or lamp-stand as his *nazar*, and that Rām Rām recognised the gift by naming the town Muktarām's *gachha*. Even before this Rām Rām, the eldest brother, had his 4 annas share separate. It is still known as the Sābek Chāriani, but is divided into three parts, the *bara hissa*, *madhyam hissa* and *chota hissa*, after his three sons. The third brother Bishnu Ram was the next to leave the *ijmāli bāri*. His share is now divided into three parts, Sridhar Bābu's taraf, Purba Chota taraf and Uttar Chota taraf.

The other shares have not suffered from subdivisions and are now the most important and wealthy. Rājā Jagat Kishor Achārjya has the whole of the second brother's share, and because he has remained in possession of the original *ijmāli bāri*, tauzi No. 7, is popularly known as the *Atani bāri*. The late Māhārāja Surjya Kanta Acharjya and his adopted son Sasi Kanta Acharjya are the representatives of the youngest brother's 4 annas, and this estate, thanks to the energy, enterprise, and careful supervision of the late Māhārājā, is now the biggest in the district. It goes by the name of the Dari Chariāni. The Mymensingh Water-works were erected by the Māhārājā in memory of his wife, Rāj Rājeshwari Debi; he also built the Town Hall and an iron bridge over the river Sutia. His estate was under the Court of Wards for three years, and after Surjya Kanta obtained his majority in 1867, his rise was rapid. He bought lands in Sherpur and Susung parganas and in Dacca, Mālda, Farīdpur, Murshidābād, Bogra and Pābna. He was made a Rāi Bāhādur in 1877, a Rājā in 1880, and a Māhārājā in 1897 at the time of the Diamond Jubilee. Surjya Kanta's adopted son Sasi Kumar Achārjya is the son of Rājā Jagat Kishor Acharjya. He is the only member of the Alāpsingh family who has been to England. He was made a Rājā Bāhādur in 1914. Rājā Jagat Kishor got his title in 1913.

Astagram—Is the most densely populated portion of Mymensingh, containing the homesteads of the cultivators of

some eight or ten revenue survey villages. There are Muhammadan *tālukdārs* of importance and any number of petty rent-free proprietors. Some are held by the priests of the Kaibartas, who form the majority of the fisherman class of the watery area. Bāngālpārā, the steamer *ghāt*, is 2 miles away, but the Dhaleswari which runs past Astagrām is the old channel of the Meghna and is navigable by launches throughout the year. Bangalpārā is the centre of the pearl fishery, which has attained some importance owing to recent lucky finds. There is a tomb of Kutub and a mosque called after him. Embanked roads to Dighipār and Bangalpārā were made by local people during the scarcity due to the floods of 1915.

Atla—This pargana does not appear in the *Ain-i-Ak-bari.* Saiyid Khān Pani was the founder of the Karatia family, and it was he who got this pargana as a jāgir from the Emperor Akbār. Up to Khodā Newāj Khān, the sixth in descent from Saiyid Khān, the Pāni family enjoyed the whole of the pargana. The first division into equal parts came with the two sons of Mānim Khān, Khodā Newāz and Maldar Khān. In 1787 the *bara* 8 annas was settled with Alāp Khān, and the other children of Khodā Newaj Khān, and the other 8 annas with Aliar Khān, son of Maldar Khān.

The property is now divided among many families. Only 2 annas 17 gandas of the pargana by inheritance now remains in the hands of the Pāni family, the rest of Tauzi No. 10, which was Alap Khān's share, having been given to the Nawāb of Dacca in 1856 as a reward for helping Sādat Ali in a civil suit against his step-mother who had dispossessed him of his whole share. Only a certain number of villages, including Gorāi, where the family then lived, was left out of the partition. Sādat Ali then moved to Karatia. Wāzed Ali Khān Pani *alias* Chand Miya now enjoys 5 annas 19 gandas 0 karas 2 krantis, and his cousins, who are under the Court of Wards, 3 annas 3 karas 1 kranti as opposed to the Nawab's 7 annas, counting the original pargana share of 5 annas 1 ganda 1 kara 1 kranti as 16 annas.

The remainder of the *Bara Atani* (2 annas 18 gandas 2 karas 2 krantis) was divided into Tauzis Nos. 11, 12, 16 and 5151 to 5153. Tejali Chaudhuri of Dhanbāri came in by marriage, and his grandson the Nawāb Saiyid Nawāb Ali Chaudhuri has added to this share by purchase. The Duajāni Mazumdārs and Baliati Shaha Chaudhuries and the Nawāb of Bogra also came in by purchase.

The *chota* 8 annas is divided into Tauzis Nos. 9 and 5031 to

5035. The Nawāb of Dacca bought the 4 annas share of Aliar's two daughters, Tauzis Nos. 5031 and 5032, on the strength of a mortgage bond for Rs. 40,000 in 1806. The remaining 4 annas belonged to Roshna Khatun. There are many co-sharers in Tauzi No. 9, known as the Pakulla Chaudhuries, who are chiefly the linear descendants of Aliar Khān. They include the Ghaznavis brothers who now live at Dilduar. The remaining 1 anna 10 gandas share has been sold to the Lahiris of Kālipur, the Sen Chaudhuries of Gauhātā and the same Shāha Chaudhuries of Baliati, who possess a portion of Tauzi No. 12.

Bajitpur—Is the only municipality in the east of the district. It does not seem to have any natural advantages to account for its population of 12,000 persons. It is 2 miles from the Ghorāutrā river and has no water connection in the cold weather. The roads from Dilālpur and Katiādi are both unbridged. Huge stretches of swamp come close up to the town on all sides, the most dreary and unpromising being that on the north. Even inside the municipal limits communications are made difficult by *khāls*, which are never free of treacherous oozing mud. In the rains the Munsiff's Court and dispensary can only be reached by boat. There is a very poor Board bungalow facing a strip of *bil* on the south.

Bājitpur was famous in the old days for its muslin manufactures and the East India Company had a factory here: details of the industry, which survives, will be found in Chapter VIII.

Bhairab Bazar—Is finely situated on a commanding bank of the Meghna just north of the point where the old Brahmaputra flows into it. The railway bridge over this river has just been opened, and the wagon ferry to Asuganj in the Tippera district transferred from Daulatkandi to Bhairab. Bhairab has long been one of the biggest jute and trade centres in the district, and its importance will increase rapidly when the railway to Mymensingh and Netrakona is opened. Unfortunately the high land available for extension is limited.

Datta Bazar—Is an important and picturesque *hāt* on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra in Gafargāon thānā. It is said to be exceptionally healthy, and the river here is particularly deep and powerful. A road runs to Moshakhāli station 6 miles distant. As there is no ferry over the river it crosses 5 miles from the station, the road from Gafargāon is more convenient. The place is notorious for thieves.

Dewanganj—Is thus described by Buchanan Hamilton. "It may contain 100 houses and for Bengal is a neat well built place. It has in the centre an open area where the market is held. The area is generally planted with elegant trees of the fig kind." It does not seem to have developed much and Bakshiganj is now a serious rival. There is another busy *hāt* of the same name on the Brahmaputra opposite Gafargāon.

Dilduar—About 7 miles south-east of Tangāil, has a fine site and some not unimposing buildings. It is the home of Mr. A. K. Ghaznavi, a Member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council since 1909, and of Maulví Saiyid Ahmed Hossein Chaudhuri. There is a mosque supported from *waqf* property, a dispensary, and a Middle English School.

Durgapur—Has some historical interest as the home of the Susung Rāj. It is pleasantly situated on the northern bank of the Someswari river. The bed of this river is wide and sandy, and there is not sufficient water for a proper ferry boat in the cold weather. Wading without a guide is dangerous, as in some places quick sands occur. There is a dispensary, District Board bungalow, and thānā.

Elashin—On the Dhaleswari, south of Tangāil, is an important jute centre, where there are usually some Europeans in residence. There is a steamer connection which runs most of the year between Dacca and Dhaleswari junction.

Gafargaon—Is important for its monthly *hāt*, where many cattle and horses change hands.

Gog-Bazar—Is the port of Kendua, which in itself is only important for its thānā, school, dispensary and bungalow.

Gopalpur—The headquarters of this thana, being half-way between Tangāil and Jamālpur, has been suggested as the headquarters of the new western district, but there is very little high land in the neighbourhood, and, unless a new railway passes quite close, the communications are very bad.

Hiluchia—Is an important jute centre. The bazār on a high mound is protected from the inroads of a *khāl* by some solid brick embutments. It is the market for many prosperous villages in this part of Bājitpur.

Hosenpur—Was the headquarters of the Khaje Kaprael *tāluk*, which comprises a large portion of Hosenshāhi pargana. There are some old ruins in the bazār and it is now an important jute centre.

Hosenshahi Pargana.—Originally part of the Nator Raj this pargana was purchased at a sale for arrears of revenue by

a Mr. Aratoon in 1790. Two daughters and relations called Holme and Stevens each succeeded to four-anna shares in 1822. All the shares were gradually sold to the Chakrabarty family of lawyers in Gangatia or settled in *patni* with the indigo planters, Wise, Carnegie and Kalanos. In 1853 Babu Sambhu Chandra Ray purchased the whole share of Agina Aratoon, and his son Mohim Ray, who settled at Atharabāri, bought more and more shares with the result that his widow Gyanada Sundari now controls 8 annas 18 gandas 1 kara and 1 kranti of the Pargana in zamindāri right and 3 annas 15 gandas in *patni*. With the 1 anna 6 gandas 2 karas 2 kranti share bought by Gyanada Sundari herself, this gives Atharabāri 14 annas as opposed to the two annas of Babu Atul Chandra Chakrabarty of Gangatia and other petty co-sharers.

Itna—Is the home of the Dewāns, who are connected with the ancient Muhammadan family who used to possess the rich Joānshāhi pargana. From very ancient times until the passenger steamer service up and down the Dhanu ceased, it was a place of some importance. The *math* is finely situated and there are several old tombs and a mosque.

Jagannathganj—Is a steamer station and the terminus of the original Eastern Bengal State Railway through the district. The flat used to have a refreshment room, but this was discontinued when the Railway ferry between Teesta Mukh and Bahādurabād was opened. Passengers to Tangāil and Serājganj must therefore make their own catering arrangements. The permanent *ghāt* is only 2 miles from Sārisābāri, but in the cold weather it is sometimes 5 or 6 miles south.

Jamalpur—Is the headquarters town of the Jamālpur subdivision and has often been proposed as the headquarters station of a new district. It is built on a hard red clay, which is a continuation of the Madhupur jungle, so the river does not cut at all, and the sites of the Subdivisional Officer's bungalow, the Munsiff's Court, the thānā, and the dispensary, are all exceptionally high and cool.

The Jināi connects with the Brahmaputra about a mile above the Criminal Courts, so that the Municipality, which covers 12 square miles, is practically a peninsula. The Railway station Singhjāni is 2 miles distant from the courts, and is now the junction of the Bahādurābād and Jagannāthganj sections of the Eastern Bengal State Railway.

From 1823 to 1857 Jamālpur was a cantonment, and there are several graves of Military Officers and their families in the cemetery. The magazine, which has long been converted into

a jail, is a good specimen of solid masonry. As the centre of the Sanyāsi rebellion Jamālpur was known as Sanyāsiganj, when in 1845 it became the first subdivision of Mymensingh.

The large Khās Mahāl which was acquired for the cantonments includes a fine grove of mangoes, which makes a splendid centre for the large *mēlā* for which Jamālpur is chiefly noted. This *mēlā* has considerable historical interest. From 1909 to 1914 it made an annual profit of from Rs. 7,000 to 10,460, about half of which is distributed to local institutions like the Donough High School.

There is an accumulated fund of Rs. 16,370 which is deposited in the Jamālpur Central Bank and is the main source from which that Bank has been able to finance a large number of Co-operative unlimited liability banks in the Mādarganj and Jamālpur and Sherpur thānās.

The *mēlā* was started in 1883 by the Subdivisional Officer, Nunda Krishna Bose. He got the idea from a similar *mēlā* started at Chandan Baisa in the Bogra district by the Sub-Manager of the Dīghapatia Rāj. A committee of 14 members in addition to the Subdivisional Officer as president was formed, of whom 8 were zamindārs and pleaders, and six officials. They were all life members with power to fill up vacancies. Subscriptions amounting to Rs. 3,153 were raised, chiefly from the Sherpur zamindārs. In the first year ordinary shopkeepers were attracted, but in the next the cattle dealers who have been the main stay of the fair stopped at Jamālpur on their way to Dacca to test the market. All the cart bullocks and many of the plough bullocks in this and the Dacca district are brought across the Jamuna from Bihar at a ferry south of Dewānganj, and the fine trees on the *Khās Mahāl* of the old cantonments at Jamālpur formed a natural halting place. The big grassy chars north of the town provided cheap fodder, and the place was found a good centre for distribution, northwards towards the Gāro Hills, and southwards to Tangāil.

In 1884 the tolls on cattle were vainly offered on ijārā at Rs. 25. At the end of the season the Committee found they had made a profit of Rs. 100 on cattle alone. In 1909 the profits from cattle on the basis of a 10-anna fee per head sold amounted to Rs. 9,345.

In 1885 Mr. Glazier, the Collector of the district, objected to the amount of money spent on religious ceremonies and miscellaneous entertainments. The people of the town began to be afraid that Government was going to take the *mēlā* out of their hands, and it does appear that Mr. Glazier did not like

the anomaly of a public institution, which was only indirectly under official control. An excuse for a general agitation was found in the fact that Mr. Glazier had had an image of *Kālī* removed from the *mēlā* ground and a rival Committee was formed, including four of the original members. They deposed the Subdivisional Officer from the presidentship, and asked him to make over the funds and papers. When the Collector vetoed this, they borrowed Rs. 500 from the Municipality and started a rival *mēlā* at Khātiakuri, 2 miles away. A crop of criminal cases was the result, each *mēlā* accusing the other of bringing in cattle dealers and fishermen by force. The High Court quashed some cases and Government called for a report from the Commissioner. As a result the Collector was censured for interfering with the doings of an independent body. In 1887 the *mēlā* took place on the original site and rules were framed by Mr. Dutt, District Magistrate, in which the principle of life membership was maintained, but the Subdivisional Officer was ex-officio President.

In 1907 the *swādeshi* volunteers marched in column to the *mēlā* on the excuse of defending the Hindu patrons from the Muhammadan rowdies, and this action led to the famous Jamālpur riots, as the result of which the temple in the Gauripur cutcherry was besieged by a Muhammadan crowd and the Subdivisional Officer and Superintendent of Police were fired at.

The *mēlā* opens in January and goes on into April.

Jamurki—Is the head quarters of the Atia zamindāri in Mymensingh, where the Nawāb of Dacca's assistant manager resides. Pākuila, which adjoins Jamurki, is the home of another branch of the Atia family. It was an important place in Rennell's time.

Joanshahi.—The founder of the original Dewān family of Joānshāhi pargana was a Muhammadan convert from the Kastail Dutt family, who took the name of Manawar, popularly Manohar Khān. Other accounts say that he was a descendant of Fateh Khān, who got possession of this once *sair jalkar* mahal at the death of his master Isā Khān. Though not mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, it was one of the parganas settled with Isā Khān, and Manohar Khān and Nur Haidar Chaudhuri may merely have got resettlement as descendants of Fateh Khān in 1787. On Manohar's death a 2 annas share was carved out of the estate for his daughter Latifa Bibi. This portion, known as Tappe Latifpur with Tauzi No. 75, is now possessed by Dinesh Babu of Dhankura. The remaining

14 annas was treated as a 16 annas estate, of which 8 annas 14¾ gandas was taken by Manohar's heirs and 7 annas 5¼ gandas by the descendants of Haidar Chaudhuri. The mahāl had to provide 20 barges to the Mughal navy, and the names Doshkoshā and Naukoshā, by which the two shares have always been described, came from the apportionment between the shares of 10¼ and 9¾ barges, respectively.

The Doshkoshā Dewāns removed to Itna, while the Naukoshā family remained at Haulibāri near Astagrām. Both zamindāries fell in arrears, and Kāli Prasād Munshi bought Tauzi No. 70. It passed through the hands of several Europeans, till in 1282 (B.S.) 8 annas was bought by the Nawāb of Dacca, 2 annas 17 gandās 2 krāntis by Māhārāja Surjyā Kanta and 3 annas 2 gandās and 2 krāntis by Hem Chandra Chaudhuri of Pukhuria. Three lakhs was the price paid by the Nawāb for his 8 annas share. The Naukoshā (Tauzi No. 4805) after undergoing several transfers was the sole property of one Chand Bibi from 1821-1835. In 1836 it was purchased by the Collector for Rs. 23,000 and resettled for the most part with the Shikmi tālukdārs, who had been paying rent to the original proprietors, as 200 or more independent khārijā tāluks.

The original partition between Tauzis Nos. 70 and 4805 had not been complete, many villages and parts of villages were still joint. The shikmi tāluks mostly consisted of compact blocks in separate villages, hence it is now difficult to trace the history of the *ijmāli* and *lakherāj* lands and to find out under which of the estates, which came out of 4,805, they are now held.

The present Dewāns of Itna have no share in any zamindāri and are only distant connections of the main line of the Doshkoshā family. The last of that line was Dewān Muhammad Afsar, who died in 1309 (B.S.) The descendants of the younger branch removed to Adampur and then to Ghāgra.

Karatia—6 miles, east of Tangāil, is the home of the original proprietors of the Atia pargana. It is situated on the Putiajāni river, which is merely a bed of sand in the cold weather. Mr. Wāzed Ali Khān Pani, the representative of the elder branch or *Bara Taraf* has rich zamindāries in the Kishorganj subdivision as well as in Atia, and the *Chhota Taraf*, now under the Court of Wards, is also a valuable estate. There are two bazārs, the larger of which known as the Mamudganj bazār is of some importance.

Karimganj—is a large jute centre, 7 miles east of Kishorganj, connected by a good road.

Katiadi—is a prosperous bazār on the Brāhmaputra. There are some good shops, and it is better served by roads than any other place in the district.

Kagmari.—Pargana Kāgmāri is not mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, but occurs in the *Jamal Kamal Sumari* of Nawāb Murshid Kuli Khān. During the reign of the Emperor Shāhjāhān, a Pir, Shāhojmān by name, was master of this pargana. Jādobendra Ray of Bakla, a follower of Shāhojmān, succeeded him. After Jādobendra, his nephew Indranarāyan Ray inherited the property. Indranarāyan having renounced his religion, his nephew Biswanāth Chaudhuri took over the whole pargana. After Biswanāth's death his three sons had the zamindāri partitioned amongst themselves. The eldest got 6 annas and the younger sons 5 annas each. Rāni Dinomani Chaudhurani is the present proprietress of the 6 annas share, Tauzi No. 45, and Babu Pramatha Nāth Ray Chaudhuri and Rājā Manmatha Nāth Ray Chaudhuri are proprietors of the 5 annas share, Tauzi No. 46. Rāmeswar Ray, the second son of Biswanāth, had no sons, but left a daughter Sibāni, and his share, called the Bara Panchāni, is now divided into many tauzis. The descendants of Sibāni are known as the Alwa zamindārs.

Khaliajuri—is a typical village of the eastern river area. It has no commercial importance but was the earliest settlement of *bhadralok* in the eastern thānās. Some of the descendants of the original proprietors of the Khaliājurī pargana still live here in reduced circumstances. When the Governor on a recent visit for duckshooting gave a grant towards a new dispensary the cost of raising sufficient earth for a site was found nearly prohibitive.

Khaliajuri Pargana.—The old name was Bhāti and it consisted entirely of jalkar mahāls. A sanyāsi named Jitāri is credited with having rescued this pargana from Kāmrup, and in the 18th century it was the property of the Hom Chaudhuries, who lived largely by piracy. Murshid Kuli Khān was preparing to send a regiment to subdue the outlaws, when Lambodar, one of the two zamindārs, thought it prudent to go to the Murshidābād court to appease him. The pargana was again settled with the Hom family on condition that Lambodar turned Muhammadan, while his brother Dāmodar remained in the old faith. The two branches, Hindu and Muhammadan, still live at Khaliājuri, but their estates have dwindled to nothing, and they have no interest in the original Khaliājuri zamindāri, Tauzi No. 74. In 1204 (B.S.) half of its

tauzi was sold by the Chaudhuries to Mr. Wallis and the remaining half to the Rays of Dhankora in 1215 (B.S.). These landlords also bought the share of one of the two daughters of Mr. Wallis, while the Karatia zamindārs became the possessors of the remaining 4 annas share.

The Mahant of the Raghab Das math at Puri owns a part of the pargana with a cutcherry at Mirga under a separate Tauzi No. 56. The partition was made in Mughal times, and the estate was alienated by one of the Hom Chaudhuries to an agent of the Nawāb, born at Dacca, who, dying childless, left it to the Puri Mahant by will.

Kishorganj—Is the head-quarters town of the Kishorganj subdivision. The Nursunda river, which runs from Nandāil and Nīlganj to the Brāhmaputra through Char Kāonā south of Hosēnpur, here opens out into a wide and deep basin, but south of Kishorganj it is only navigable even for small boats for a few months in the year, and the chief exit for jute is the broad road, half of which is *pukkā*, to Hosēnpur.

The Haibatnagar zamindārs used to have some fine houses in the town, but they have fallen into disrepair. The magnificent temple of Laksmi Narāyan was shattered in the earthquake.

The town was formerly noted for its muslin manufactures and the East India Company had a factory here as well as in Bājitpur. During the *Jhulan Jātrā* (August-September) a big *mēlā* is attended by traders from many outside districts.

Madanpur.—(Netrokona). Madanpur is associated with a Muhammadan saint named Shāh Sultān who came from Turkey and settled at the site now known as the Darga. Madan, the Koch king of the village, tried to poison him, but being convinced of his saintly character accepted Islām and settled the whole village on Shāh Sultān and his disciples in perpetuity.

In 1829 A. D. the Government tried to resume this lakherāj but on the strength of a document dated 1082 A. Hijira released it in favour of the Jagirdār Saiyid Jalaluddin Muhammad. It appears from that document that Shāh Muhammad Sultān Rumi and his preceptor Saiyid Shah Surkh Khul Antia settled in this village with their disciples called *khadems* in 445 A. H. The present generation of the villagers claim their descent from those 10 *khadems*, and these 10 principal houses enjoy the income derived from the offerings to the shrine by rotation and consequently their year consists of 10 months. These families now have so many members that

some of them enjoy the income for a few hours of one day only.

The administration of the property is invested in a council of elders consisting of 10 leading men of the original families. There is a custom that the members who get the income of the day are bound to feed as many guests as may come on that day. At night a big drum is beaten by the guard of the shrine, the number of strokes exceeding by one the number of guests awaiting entertainment. In order to keep the profits of the shrine intact within the community, daughters are never married outside the village.

Madhupur.—This village is marked in Rennell's map and at one time gave its name to the Thānā of Gopalpur. There is an ancient Hindu temple of Madan Gopal Bigraha belonging to Rāni Hemanta Kumari Debi of Putia. An estate with an income of about Rs. 7,000 has been set apart for the maintenance of this temple, where about 60 guests are fed daily. About 1787 it was the head quarters of one of the Sanyāsi gangs under Rup Gir Sanyāsi. The ruins of important buildings, which were in good condition until the last earthquake, are still in existence. The Sanyāsis also had buildings in Boāli, an adjacent village. The zamindārs of the time were terrorised into granting many rent-free lands for the maintenance of temples of Sīva and the descendants of the Sanyāsis are still in possession.

Mohanganj—On the Kangsha is the largest trading centre in the east of the district, having a considerable trade with Sylhet. A bazār sits twice daily and on Wednesdays the *hāt* is thronged with people from 5 A.M. to 11 P.M. and a fleet of 400 boats of all sizes may be counted on the river. The total attendance has been reckoned at 30,000. Ghee, fowls, oranges and fish are wonderfully cheap and plentiful. The country people buy with a seer of 60 tolas and sell their own produce with one of 90 or 84 tolas. The *nazar* paid for a hut in the bazār is Rs. 700.

There is a proposal to tap the resources of this neighbourhood by extending the new Mymensingh-Netrakona line to Mohanganj. At present all the exports, worth 12 lakhs at the lowest computation, go down the Dhanu river by country boat.

Itna—Is situated in the centre of an enormous *hāor* or *bīl* on the edge of an open lake and the *pukka* buildings can be seen from miles away. It is the cutcherry of the Mahant of Puri, who has retained a considerable share of the Khaliājuri Pargana.

Muktagacha—Is a Municipality, owing its importance to its being the home of the proprietors of Alāpsingh Pargana. It is not situated on any river and has no natural facilities for trade. The zamindārs' houses are interspersed with numerous unhealthy tanks and insanitary quarters. It is typical of the Mymensingh landlords, that they allow the prostitutes' quarters to occupy the centre of the town right in the face of their Zenana windows.

Mymensingh Town—Still called Nāsirabād by the Muhammadans of the adjoining villages, owes its commercial importance to its being the headquarters of the district and its railway facilities. The Brāhmaputra is only navigable by large country boats during the rains. Mr. Wroughton selected the site in 1793 on account of the width of the high land and the civil station is built on Tāluk Bayard which was acquired by the Collector of that name. There is a race course with a circuit of 1½ miles and the bungalows inside it are on sites originally leased on nominal terms to various Europeans for building houses. The Alāpsingh and Mymensingh landlords who acquired these interests now make a handsome profit by letting the houses to the district officials. The Collector's house was built in 1808, and there is a church and a cemetery.

As early as 1811 Mymensingh was classed as a town and under the orders of the Board the Collector assessed a tax of Rs. 1,743 on 2,086 houses. In 1823 the Collector again writes that, the collection of "even Rs. 400 in town duties would be of infinite benefit in making roads, bridges and draining."

The water-supply is derived from the Brahmaputra. The Rajā Bāhādur has a palace built at a cost of 7 lakhs in 1910.

Mymensingh and Jafarshahi.—More is known of the earlier history of these parganas than of most of the others in the district. When the ancient kingdom of Kāmrup began to be dismembered in the 15th century, the Rājās of Gaur amalgamated Jafarshāhi and other portions of Mymensingh west of the Brāhmaputra with their kingdom, while a Koch chieftain named Bokai made Pokāinagar his head-quarters. The remains of this fortress make a picturesque camping ground just east of Bhawānipur. About 1495 Husain Shāh, King of Gaur, subjugated the whole district, and placed his son Nasrat Shāh in charge; from this chieftain the old name of Nasirabād is derived, the modern name Mymensingh comes from Momin Shah, one of his lieutenants. In 1582, when the Mughals overthrew the Pathan dynasty of Gaur, Rajā Todār

Mal made an elaborate rent-roll known as the Wasil Tumar Jama, by which the Mymensingh pargana was included in Sarkar Bazuha, and the Jafarshāhi pargana in Sarkar Ghoraghat. Both parganas were amongst the 22 granted by the Emperor Akbar to Isā Khān of Khizirpur, but neither was retained by his family after his death.

Early in the seventeenth century Mymensingh was held by one Muhammad Mendi of Tikara in Atia. During an invasion by the King of Assam in 1637 many villages were desolated, and the family was unable to pay the revenue, whereupon in 1657, the Nawāb Shāh Shujā resettled it with the Datta family of Mangalsidhi. Shortly after this one-sixth passed to the Nandi family of Rampur in Netrakona as a marriage dowry. Quarrels between the co-sharers led to the revenue again falling in arrears, and Murshid Kuli Khān authorized the local *Wadadar*, Mirza Muhammad Tehar Beg, to confine five of the proprietors. Three of these succumbed to torture, and the two others gave up the estate, taking a lakherāj property of 25 puras for their maintenance. The *sanad* dated 1116 (B.S.) of Muhammad Beg, confirmed by Sri Krishna Chaudhuri in 1143 (B.S.), was recognised as valid in the resumption proceedings instituted by Mr. J. A. Yule in 1843, and by virtue of this agreement the two families of Dattas and Nandis still possess some acres.

Sri Krishna Chaudhuri, the founder of the line of the present zamindārs of Mymensingh, was chosen as zamindār by the Nawāb, in return for his services as a kanungo. Like the Nātor Rāj family, he traced his descent from the Brahman Beataranga, who came from Kānauj about 964 (A.D.) to perform certain ceremonies for King Adisur of Gaur. Sri Krishna's father, Jay Nārāyan Talāpātra, who was settled at Karai in Bogra, had already received the two parganas of Taraf Karai and Tappe Hindi in 1710 from Murshid Kuli Khān.

Sri Krishna's son, Chand Ray, also rendered good services to the next Nawāb, and on the ground that the machinations of the late owners had made it almost impossible to pay the revenue out of the assets of the Mymensingh pargana, the now very valuable pargana of Jafarshāhi was thrown in and no extra revenue demanded. Its then owners, the descendants of one Musnad Ali, who had succeeded Isā Khān, had fallen into serious financial trouble at about the same time as the Nandi Dattas. From this date the two parganas have had a common history and have paid revenue jointly.

By each of his wives, Sri Krishna left two sons, Ray Chand and Hari Nārāyan having predeceased him. These soon

quarrelled, and the Rays (sons of Svarbajaya) settled in Krisnapur, and the sons of Maheswari, who kept the title of Chaudhuri, settled in Malancha, both existing villages in Jafarshāhi. Shortly afterwards the separation of Ganga Nārāyan-Chaudhuri from his brothers led to his taking up his residence in the neighbouring village of Mahiramkul. Sri Krishna himself lived in the Mymensingh pargana at Pokāinagar; it seems a pity that the Sanyāsi rebellion, with the settlement of robber gangs at Sanyāsiganj (afterwards the site of the Jamalpur cantonment) and the burning of the Melancha cutcherry, was successful in driving the family back to the eastern pargana. The present homes of the Rays and Chaudhuris at Gauripur, Ramgopalpur and Kalipur are surrounded with swamps and compare very unfavourably with the higher and healthier and more picturesque villages in the centre of the Jafarshāhi pargana.

Until 1908 the 8 annas share of Taraf Ray was held jointly by the descendants of Krishna Kishor and Krishna Gopal, but at the Permanent Settlement the pargana was settled in four equal shares as separate tauzis. Jugal Kishor, the adopted son of Krishna Gopal, tried to prevent his uncle's widows adopting a son, but a *sanad* of Warren Hastings, dated 12th July 1774, recognized the title of the widows. They then moved from Gauripur to Ramgopalpur, where they devoted themselves to building temples and establishing religious foundations.

On the death of Ratnamāla, the Sadar Adalat again defeated the ambition of Jugal Kishor and gave the whole 4 annas share to Nārāyani. Narāyani's great grandson, Kashi Kishor, was the first Honorary Magistrate in this district. His son, the present Rājā of Rāmgopālpur, is the sole proprietor of the senior 4 annas share. He was made a Rāi Bāhādur in 1895 and a Rājā in 1909. Of Jugal Kishor Ray, the founder of the Gauripur family, Mr. Wroughton wrote thus in his report of 1788:—"He manages his own business, and by his prudence, care and abilities is a man of considerable property. His share is by far the best cultivated, and the ryots are contented and happy. His riches, regularity in business and punctuality in payment give him an undoubted advantage over Syam Chand and Rudra Chand." His services in the Sanyāsi rebellion were also much appreciated by the English Government. But his depredations in Tappe Singdha, where his *lāthiāls* looted the two great markets of Mohanganj and Lakshmiganj, were reported to the then Commissioner Mr. Douglas, and a full enquiry was ordered by Sir John Shore.

Finally he was acquitted for lack of evidence by Mr. Wroughton.

Jugal Kishor's share descended through an adopted grandson to Rājendra Kishor, who again died childless. His widow Bisveswari Debi enjoyed a fourth of the estate (Gauripur 4 annas) as a separate estate until her death a short time ago. Her adopted son, Brajendra Kishor, who brought the well-known *swadeshi* case against Mr. Clarke, the Collector of the district, in connection with the Jamālpur riots in 1907, is the sole proprietor of the second 4 annas share.

The share of Taraf Chaudhuri.—The following account from Wroughton of the third or Kalipur 4 annas illustrates the important part played by adoption in the history of these zamindār families :—"This mahāl is the property of Harnath, the adopted son of Ganga Narāyan, second son of Sri Krishna ; this young man is the principal cause of the present dispute. At first he put himself under the protection of Syamchand, and the two estates were managed jointly. Being a very young boy, rumours were started that he had not been properly adopted, and Syamchand was induced to usurp such an authority as made him justly fearful of being deprived of his right. He died in 1792, and his widow Ganga Debi adopted a son, Krishna Nath, whose adoption was declared invalid by the Provincial Court in 1828." Thus Harnath's 4 annas share passed to the sons of his sister Gauri Debi (*a*) Srikanta Lahiri Chaudhuri, (*b*) Kamal Kanta Lahiri Chaudhuri, and (*c*) Uma Kanta Lahiri Chaudhuri, each receiving 1-6-2-2 share.

(a) *Bara Taraf.*—Sri Kanta was the eldest, and his line is still called "Bara Taraf." He had two sons (1) Nil Kanta, and (2) Ratna Kanta ; each got 0-13-1-1. Nil Kanta's adopted son Abhayakanta left a son, Bijay Kanta, who is the present proprietor of the share, having attained his majority in 1908. Ratna Kanta had two sons, Tārā Kanta and Surjya Kanta. This estate was joint, but at the death of Tārā Kanta it was divided, each getting 0-6-2-2. Tāra's widow adopted Jāmini Kanta, who has let out his 0-6-2-2 share in patni to Dharani Kanta Lāhiri Chaudhuri. Gauripur has bought tauzi 77, the other 6-2-2 share. Surjya died without heirs male, and his widow adopted Abani Kanta, an extravagant person, who has been forced to sell most of his property. It was bought by Brajendra Kishor Ray Chaudhuri of Gauripur, Swarnamayi Debi of Krishnapur and Dharani Kanta Lāhiri of Kālipur.

(b) *Madhyam Taraf.*—Kamala Kanta's grandson Girija Kanta inherited his father Syāmkanta's share ; he died in 1907

leaving four sons, his widow being appointed executrix (Bhabatārini Debya). She is at present managing the property.

(c) *Chhota Taraf.*—Uma Kanta's son Tārini Kanta purchased also a share of the Sherpur pargana. He died in 1884, leaving an adopted son Dharani, the present proprietor.

The owner of the remaining 4 annas share of the pargana was Lakshmi Nārāyan, fourth son of Sri Krishna. For some years he lived with his brother Ganga Nārāyan at Malancha, and then removed to his father's ancestral home at Bokāinagar, where he died, leaving three sons, Syamchand, Rudrachand and Gobindachand. Rudra remained at the ancestral home. Gobinda went to Golakpur, while Syamchand built a separate house near the ancestral home.

Harishchandra, the grandson of Syamchandra, moved to Golakpur in 1853. This share has been held under the Court of Wards since 1911. Rai Satis Chandra Chaudhuri Bāhādur, who received his title in 1907, is the representative of Rudra's branch.

But for the extravagances of one of Gobinda's heirs, Hāra Chand, which brought about the alienation of his share, the descendants of Sri Krishna Chaudhuri would have the creditable record of still keeping the whole of the original zamindāries in their hands.

Netrakona—Is the head-quarters town of the Netrakona subdivision. It is situated in bends of the Mogra river which make it practically an island. The *maidan* is rather small, but there is a fine tank built by the Gauripur landlords. Big flats are brought up from Nārāyanganj by launches in the rains and there is a large trade in jute. The District Board bungalow has a good site on the Mymensingh side of the river. The other buildings are very ordinary and inadequate.

Nikli-Dampara—Is the chief jute centre on the Dhanu river. Nikli is a large Government estate, one of the few managed khas by the Subdivisional Officer of Kishorganj.

Nilganj—Is the port of Kishorganj and connects it with all the waterlogged areas of the north and east of the district. As it is on the railway from Kishorganj it should be capable of great development. There is quite a fair quantity of high land on both banks of the river, at present covered with very dilapidated godowns.

Pingna—Is situated on a dried up *khāl* two or three miles from the main bank of the Jamuna. It is only important as possessing a Munsiff's Court and a High School.

Purbadhala—Is a fair sized village on the banks of the Dhala river known further along its course as the Mogra. It is the home of one branch of the so-called Rāj family of Tauzi No. 137 descended from Rājā Raghunath Singh. It contains important cutcherries of Hem Babu of Pukhuria and Rājā Bāhādur Sashi Kanta of Mymensingh, whose quarrels resulted in serious breaches of the peace in 1906. There are two *hāts*. The water-supply is derived from the fine open *bil* known as Rajdhala.

Pukhuria.—This pargana well illustrates the Muhammadan principle that all land was the property of the State and the zamindārs liable to constant change as well as to personal penalties, if they did not pay up the whole of the profits promptly.

In Todar Mal's settlement the pargana was apparently one with Joānshāhi in the extreme east of the district, though until 1793 it was part of Rājshāhi and not in Mymensingh at all. Isā Khān held it for a short time and Murshid Kuli Khān gave it to Ispinjir Khān and Manohar Khān. These persons defaulted and were taken prisoners to Murshidābād, and Rāi Raghunandan, the Prime Minister of the Nawāb, received a *sanad* for the pargana in the name of his brother Rājā Rāmjiban. Raghunandan's heirs were his son's widow, Rani Bhābāni of Nātor, his grandson Rām Krishna and his daughter Tāra Sundari. Rām Krishna took settlement from the English in 1791 and agreed to pay Rs. 70,662 as revenue. Two years later he fell in arrears, and Bhubanendra Nārāyan Ray of Puthia bought the estate at auction for Rs. 62,100. The new landlord also found it impossible to raise the revenue, and Government authorised the raising of the rents from one rupee to Re. 1-6-8 per *pakhi*, an increment which is still to be traced in the collection papers as the *Rasad Bār*.

Bhubanendra had considerable difficulty in taking possession owing to the machinations of Dayārām, the ancestor of the Dighāpatia family, and others of the *amlas* of the late zamindār, who concealed the estate papers and kept him out of possession of some of the most valuable mahāls. Nothing could be realised from the Bālasutidigar Taraf (Bāze Tāluk) with a revenue of Rs. 17,000 and the Chatalia Mahāl with a revenue of Rs. 16,573, which Dayārām had got attached by the Civil Court on the ground that they were valid tenures granted to Tārā Sundari Devi and the Thākurs of Pakuria in Rājshāhi and did not come under the title of the purchaser. Accordingly, Bhubanendra applied to the Collector, Mr. Tufton, to

take the whole pargana into *khās* possession and to grant *masahārā*. This officer reported the case to the Board. They replied that unless Dayārām claimed the lands as proprietor, there should be no difficulty in turning him out through the ordinary processes of law. Mr. Vanderheyden, however, dissented. "Though Government at the time of sale does not guarantee any given quantity of land or any given resources, yet it certainly must be understood to guarantee the possession of the thing sold. To sell a thing and afterwards leave the party purchasing to his own means of obtaining possession would appear to me highly unjust." "Mr. Buller and Mr. Hatch agreed with Mr. Vanderheyden on the ground that, the demands of revenue upon the purchaser could not be suspended on any plea of the property being in dispute; section 5 of Regulation 44 of 1793 voids all engagements between the former proprietors and the undertenants." The Collector was accordingly directed to put the purchaser in possession of the whole pargana, but, whether as the result of the civil litigation or for other reasons, it is certain that his intervention came to nothing and neither of the mahāls referred to above was restored to the zamindār of the pargana. The Māhārājā of Nātor, the descendant of Tāra Sundari Devi's nephew, to whom she made a gift of it in 1795, is still in possession of the Bāze Tāluk which was at last recognised as an independent Government Estate, Tauzi No. 13206, in 1910.

Bayard fixed the revenue at Rs. 70,762, but the Tālukdars in 1807 were Rs. 31,800 in arrears and there was danger of the estate being sold again. Jagat Nārāyan died in Rājshāhi in 1817, leaving a widow Bhubanmoyi. She applied for a partition of her 12 annas share and Bhairabananda Ray, minor, failing to pay his share, Government purchased this 4 annas and became a party to the partition which was completed in 1843. Raja Bhairabananda recovered his share on attaining his majority after threatening a civil suit. This marks the change of theory as to the ownership of zamindāries under British rule: none of Rājā Bhairabananda's predecessors could have contemplated any such action.

The original tauzi No. 122 was retained for the 12 annas share of the Rāni Bhuban Moyi Devi. She adopted a son Rājā Harendra Nārāyan. But her daughter Kasiswari Devi contested the validity of the adoption and a suit followed, which was compromised. Raja Harendra Nārāyan gave 2 annas share to Kasiswari. Her son got this share partitioned as Tauzi No. 6100. It is still possessed by his successor Babu Bhaba Prasād Khān

Chaudhuri of Puthia. Rāni Hemanta Kumāri Devi of Puthia possesses the other 10 annas share.

Raja Bhairabananda's 4 annas share was Tauzi No. 4806. He sold two annas and gave the remaining two annas in Patni to a Bhuya from the Pabna district, who is the grandfather of Babu Hem Chandra Chaudhuri, the present proprietor. The family seat was originally at Ambaria, a pleasantly situated village on the bank of the Bangsa river, but this place was found too unhealthy owing to its nearness to the Madhupur Jungle. A move was made to Subarnakhāli on the Jamuna. A few years ago, the river completely cut away this site and Hemnagar was the third choice. At great cost big tanks were excavated in order to build *pukka* buildings on their banks, 12 feet above the level of the extremely low plain all around, and a dazzling temple of brick and glass erected.

Padma Lochan brought a suit for the separation of his two annas as Tauzi No. 5513 in 1842 and in 1854 his son bought the superior interest in the remaining two annas.

Sarisabari—Is a town with large godowns and presses and a considerable European population in the jute season. It was made into a Union for sanitary administration in 1910. The income raised from subscriptions is about Rs. 1,400 and the District Board contributes Rs. 600

Sherpur—Is an important Municipality 9 miles north of Jamālpur. It is the head-quarters of the landlords of the Sherpur pargana, but the residence of Govinda Prasad in the 3 annas *sāhām* was made over to the Susung Rājā on one of his visits, it being a tradition of that family never to take a meal on land other than their own.

In 1807 a separate Magistrate's Court was established at Kāliganj (the old name of the Sherpur bazār) and for some years a garrison was established there to act against Gāro marauders and to watch the bank of the Brahmaputra, which in the 18th century extended from Jamālpur to Sherpur. Practically all that now remains of the cantonments is the cemetery.

The Sherpur landlords have been Honorary Magistrates for a long term of years. The Rāi Bāhādur Rādha Ballabh Chaudhury was invested with powers to take complaints in 1891, and the same powers were given to the head of the 9-anna house in 1910. His father Har Chandra Chaudhury had been gazetted with similar powers in 1875. The result is that Sherpur and Nālitabāri almost form a separate subdivision, and

bring very little work to the sub-divisional Officer of Jamālpur.

The landlords maintain a hospital and a *dharmasālā* which costs Rs. 10,000 annually. The 9-anna *bāri* contains a library which boasts of some manuscripts 500 years old.

The biweekly *hāt* is densely crowded and in 1907 a petty quarrel about vegetables led to a serious attack on the barracks of the punitive police by an excited mob. Further references to Sherpur will be found in the history chapter.

Sherpur Pargana—was annexed to Bengal when Sylhet was conquered by the Muhammadans in 1384, but was in the hands of the Koches until Husain Shāh colonized it with Muhammadans in the 16th century. It was subsequently one of the 32 mahāls of Todār Mal in 1582, with a revenue of Rs. 41,140-4, and was one of the 22 parganas granted to Isā Khān. The comrades in arms of Isā Khān, however, wrested some of them from him, 4 Majhlases taking Khāliajurī and Nasirujial and four Ghāzis Sherpur and Phāwāl.

The old name of Daskahania is traditionally ascribed to the fact that it cost *das kāhan* (*i.e.*, 10 multiplied by 1,280 cowries or Rs. 10) to cross the ferry from Jamālpur.* Its new name comes from Sher Ali, the last of the Ghāzis. This chieftain is said to have coveted the daughter of a Kabirāj in Darsa in the Durgapur thānā and put her husband, Ram Ballabh, a kanungo in the Nawāb's service at that cutcherry, to death. His wife escaped to the Nawāb's Court, and this prince's Subahdar, Aziz Khan, punished Sher Ali by giving the pargana to Ram Ballabh's son, Rām Nāth. The original home of this Vaidya family was in Murshidābād district. It did not move to Sherpur till 1675.

Rām Nāth had three sons, Srikrishna, Sriballabh and Gopāl. A portion of the pargana, about 2 annas, subsequently known as Sāgardi, was separated by a gift from Rām Govinda, son of Sriballabh, to a member of the Mazumdar family of Kanda in the Dacca district. The rest of the pargana passed to Jogajiban, son of Srikrishna, who left four sons, Jay Nārāyan, Kandarpa, Mod Nārāyan and Hari Nārāyan. When Jay Nārāyan died, Mod Narāyan took on the management for Surja Nārāyan, the eldest son of Jay Nārāyan. When the latter attained his majority, the revenue was hopelessly in arrears and he was put in jail. The estate was actually settled with one Binod Nārāyan, but thanks to the exertions of Krishna Prosād Nāg, it was restored to the family by the favour of the Nawāb. On

* Buchanan's explanation is that 10 kahans was the khalsa or real part of the revenue as opposed to the jāigirs.

the death of Surja Nārāyan in 1770, the first partition took place, the descendants of Jay Nārāyan and Kandarpa getting 9 annas and the descendants of Mod and Hari Nārāyan 7 annas.

In 1774 (B.C.) Kirtti Nārāyan, the grandson of Jay Nārāyan, who was managing the whole pargana in this year, was put into jail for arrears of revenue by Patterson, Judge of Dacca, and at the same time the troubles with Gāro tribes on the north of the pargana came to a head. Kirtti Narāyan was wounded by an arrow and died. His wife committed "Satī." The Buxari Barkandazes, or mercenaries, who were recruited to fight the Gāros, rebelled and twice carried off members of the family to the hills.

Pratāp Nārāyan managed the estate for Kirtti Nārāyan's minor sons, Krishna Chandra and Rāj Chandra. Warren Hastings upheld Pratāp against the descendants of Sri Gopāl who claimed the estate. Meanwhile Brajanāth, grandson of Mod Nārāyan, took over the management of the 7 annas share.

Pratāp separated his 4½ annas share from that of his nephews. The 7 annas was also partitioned, 1½ annas going to Rāmnāth, grandson of Mod Nārāyan by his son Raghunath, 2½ annas to Brajanāth, Mod Nārāyan's other grandson, and 3 annas to Sibnāth, grandson of Hari Nārāyan. Thus the descendants of Kandarpa were alone left without a share. As the result of fierce litigation, his grandson Upendra Nārāyan and his daughter-in-law Bhawānī Chaudhurānī were allotted 3½ annas, 5½ being kept for the elder branch. Of the 3½ annas, Brajanāth Chaudhury, the founder of the Arāiani zamindāri, got 1 anna (Tauzi No. 141) as a reward for his help, thus incidentally restoring equality between the two so-called 9-anna and 7-anna houses

The partition apparently took 15 years. An amin was deputed in 1809, but when no progress had been made by 1813, the Board called for an explanation, and Mr. Packenham, in recommending the deputation of Mr. Maxwell for three years with the powers of an Assistant Judge and Magistrate to settle the disputes and to look after the partition, wrote as follows :—

"Great blame is certainly imputable to the amīns, but in Sherpur they have no common obstruction to surmount. The zamīndāri is one of the most lucrative in the country, and has long been the seat of the most serious affrays and has been one of the greater sources of troubles and annoyance to the judicial powers at this station. The zamindārs and tālukdārs are bold and daring, and at the same time being rich, it is more

the Amins' interest to side with the most powerful than to perform their duty by loing justice towards the weak. There is also an intricate investigation delegated to the Amin which holds out strong temptation to him to be corrupt or, otherwise, personal risk of insult and even assault." In 1794 a warrant was issued for arrest of the 3 annas proprietor, but cancelled by the Board who ordered that "no proprietor of land shall be imprisoned for arrears who has landed property which, if sold, will be sufficient to make good the deficiency." By 1820 the partition was finished, but the cost being realised as abwābs from the ryots caused fresh breaches of the peace.

In 1833 two bands of Pāgal Panthis under Janhu and Dobrāj looted Sherpur and set fire to the thana. Mr. Sarrel, Joint-Magistrate, with police barkandāzes defeated Dobrāj, who later surprised him and carried off four of his men. The Collector had to send military assistance; 150 men from Jamālpur under Captain Seal surprised a camp of 4,000 men near Jelangi north of Goalpāra at the foot of the hills, and we hear of no further trouble.

The share of Kirtti Nārāyan's children is now possessed as Tauzi No. 139 by Rāi Bāhādur Chāru Chandra Chaudhuri and his two brothers. To Pratap's 2¼ annas there were many claimants, and Kishori Mohan had to part with much of the property as the price of his success. Goālgāon and other big māhāls were alienated to Māhārājā Surja Kanta Achārjyā and three-quarters of Tauzi No. 4082 was sold for Rs. 1,80,000 to Rājā Bisan Chand Dudhuria, who, however, gave it back as a permanent patni interest to the vendor. Jnanendra Mohan Chaudhuri, a Deputy Magistrate, and his brother are now the proprietors of the 2, annas zamindari and some smaller interest in Tauzi No. 138.

The principal representatives of the 7 annas branch are Babu Gopāl Dās and Babu Satindra Kumar Chaudhuri. The lands of their Tauzis 142 and 143 and 5 gandas of 144 are indivisible and are known as the Arāi Anna zamindāri. They have also shares in 138, 140, 141 and 4083. Rāi Bāhādur Radha Ballabh Chaudhuri, who got his title in 1889, has a one-anna share in Tauzi No. 4083.

Susang.—The founder of the family was a Brāhman, Somēshwar Pāthak, who came from Kanauj towards the end of the 13th century and made himself master of the Gāros on the lower hills between Sylhet and Mymensingh by the help of the plainsmen and of a band of Sādhus, from whose good company his territory was known as "Susanga." He forced

the King of the Khasia Hills to cede some villages, and he obtained possession of the Husain Pratal pargana of Sylhet. Someshwar's son, Budhimanta Kānta, was the first of his family to marry his daughter to a Barendra Kulin Brāhman, and this custom has since been kept up. The eldest surviving son continued to succeed his father for the next three generations. Jānakināth in the sixth generation from the founder is said to have stolen a 7-year old bride for his grandson from the Rāja of Tāhirpur (in Rājshāhi), the Kulin of Kulins.

In the time of the next ruler Raghunāth the Gāros gave considerable trouble, and the family sacrificed its hitherto independent position by asking help from Akbar's Viceroy Mān Singh, and promising to pay a tribute of *agar* wood. Raghunāth fought with Mān Singh against Chānd Ray of Bikrampur, and the present capital of the family, Durgapur, got its name from the Dasābhiya or family idol of Chānd Ray, with which Raghunāth returned as his share of the spoils. Among other stories to show Raghunāth's miraculous strength, it is narrated that on his wedding night, taking his bride on his back, he fought his way through the forces of his hereditary enemy, the Joārdār or Chieftain of Baulā, who had arranged the marriage solely with the treacherous purpose of getting the young prince within his power.

Raghunāth's son, Rāmnāth, went to Delhi and accepted a *sanad* from the Emperor Jahāngīr. He is said to have adopted the family motto *Matināsh* because of his folly in refusing to accept *sanads* at Jahāngīr's hands for six neighbouring parganas in the names of his six brothers. When he got back from Delhi he found they were all dead. Rāmnāth was succeeded by his nephew Rāmjīban, but before his death he created a *maurasi tāluk* in favour of Jadabendra, which, being inherited by Harirām Phāduri* was separately settled at the decennial settlement as Tauzi No. 137. Henceforth the interest of the Susung Rājās has been confined to the remaining 14 annas of the original pargana, Tauzi No. 136.

In Aurangzeb's time the reigning Rājā stopped the payment of tribute, but before he could take steps to fortify his capital, he was taken prisoner to Murshidābād and compelled to embrace the Muhammadan faith and marry a Muhammadan girl under the name of Abdul Rahmān. Later on, when he proposed to divide his estate between his Hindu and Muhammadan families, the Muhammadan Government apparently

* The so-called Rāj families of Purbadhala and Ghagra are Harirām's descendants.

repented, and sided with the son of the Hindu wife, Rono Singh, in whose favour Abdul Rahmān abdicated in 1735, taking Dihi Mahādeb out of the estate for his own maintenance and for succession to the Muhammadan branch of his family.

Rono Singh's son Rājā Kishor is credited with the establishment of various Hajang families at the foot of the hills to help in his elephant-catching operations. The kheddah profits not proving sufficient to pay the revenue regularly, Rājā Kishor and his brother were taken prisoners to Dacca in 1757. They were sentenced to daily whipping for a week and then to be blown from a cannon's mouth if the money was not paid, but were saved by the unexpected occupation of Dacca by the British forces.

The decennial settlement was made with Rāj Singh, and about this time the title of Rājā was recognised by the Company. Unfortunately for the family fortunes, Rāj Singh left three sons, who all registered their names in the Collectorate and in 1827 began to collect rents separately. When Jagannāth died in 1829, his widow Indramani registered her name in the Collectorate, and when Gopinath died in 1833 his widow Harasundari was also registered. It was not until 1843, when Harasundari migrated to Sankarpur with her two daughters and applied for a partition under Regulation XIX of 1814, that the eldest brother Biswanāth put forward his claims to be the sole proprietor of the estate on the ground of a family custom of primogeniture. It says much for the strength of Biswanāth's claim that in spite of the many years in which his conduct might easily have been held to bring in estoppel against him, he won his case in the lower court in 1844 and also on appeal before the sadar court in 1847. He was not so successful in turning his sisters-in-law out of possession, and in 1856 the sadar court, reversing the decision of the lower court that family custom was established in favour of the succession of the eldest son, gave one-third of Tauzi 136 to Indramoni's adopted son Srikrishna.

By this time Prān Krishna had succeeded his father. In 1861 he induced the sadar court to set aside Srikrishna's adoption and to give him Jagannāth's share as the nearest heir, and encouraged by the Privy Council's rejection on default of Harasundari's appeal against the order disallowing the partition, in 1862 he again brought the question of the family custom before the courts. He got a decree in the Court of the Principal Sadar Amin, but after his death the decision was reversed by the Privy Council in 1868. Thus Harasundari's 4 annas 13

gandas 1 kara and 1 krānti of the original 16 annas pargana finally passed out of the hands of the Susang family. Harimoni's two daughters Barada and Pramada each got 2 annas and Ram Chandra Mazumdar 13 gandas 1 kara 1 krānti by purchase, in addition to the various permanent tenures which his intrigues in the family had already secured out of the estate.

In 1841 a dispute about some Gāro mahāls with the Government had been settled in favour of the Rāj by the Revenue Commissioner of Assam. Further litigation on the subject of the boundaries was carried on by Prān Krishna and his son, but before the Privy Council could formulate a decision, Government by Act XXII of 1869 excluded the Gāro Hills from the jurisdiction of all courts. Rājkrishna won his case, but was obliged to accept the life-title of Māhārājā Bahadur and a sum of Rs. 1,50,000 as a somewhat inadequate compensation for his rights in the hills.

The present generation, following the example of Rājkrishna and his brothers, reverted to the old custom by which the eldest son manages the whole estate. One uncle, however, Jagat Krishna claimed partition in 1896. He was put off with certain 16 annas mauzas, but from this date the joint estate has been under a private manager, who is supposed to act in accordance with the unanimous opinion of all the proprietors. The continual litigation has impoverished the estate. Its collection cannot be more than 3 lakhs, while the revenue and cesses are Rs. 11,254 and Rs. 10,663, respectively.

The joint estate by means of purchases and permanent lease from the heirs of Harimoni and others now comprises 9 annas 15 gandas 3 karas 1 krānti in zamindāri and 3 annas 3 gandas 2 krānti in patni right in Tauzi 136 considered as 16 annas. The other proprietors are Rājā Ramesh Chandra Singha, son of Jagat Krishna, Rājā Sashi Kanta Achārjya and the Narāyandahar Mazumdars. By a friendly partition in most villages the shares of the Māhārājā, Romesh and Sashi Kanta Achārjya are combined in the hands of one or the other over all tenancies except rent-free tenures.

Tangail—Is the head-quarters of the south-western subdivision. It is quite a pretty place with plenty of trees and well-laid out roads. In 1912 a big basin of the Lohajang river was banked up, and converted into a park and playground Santosh, the home of the Kāgmāri zamindārs, is two miles away on the other side of the river.

Tangāil has been considered as the head-quarters of a new

district, but the communications with Porabāri, the nearest steamer station, are too bad, and it is doubtful if the railway to Serājganj can be extended across the river so as to touch any point near Tangāil, as there is no permanent high bank south of Pingna. Tangāil has a bad reputation for malaria, which is hardly deserved in years when the Brahmaputra has been in high flood. The dispensary has recently been made over by its founders, the Santosh family, to the Municipality. There are no important buildings.

Tarail—Is an important trading centre on the river, which running south from Gog Bazâr makes the *boro* growing area to the east an unapproachable country with characteristics all its own.

Tappe Hazradi.—Hazrādi was one of the so-called 22 parganas comprising practically the whole of the present Mymensingh district granted to Isā Khān in 1597 by the Emperor Akbar. The following seems to be the complete list :—(1) Hazrādi, (2) Hosenshāhi, (3) Joār Hosenpur, (4) Darjibāzu, (5) Katraba with Kurikhāi, (6) Maheshwardi, (7) Singdha, (8) Bhawāl, (9) Pāitkara, (10) Gangamandal, (11) Nasirujiāl, (12) Khaliājurī, (13) Jafarshāhi, (14) Mymensingh, (15) Alāpsingh, (16) Joānshāhi, (17) Sherpur, (18) Barabāju, (19) Kāgmāri, (20) Atia, (21) Sonargāon, (22) Bardakhat with Bardakhat Māgra in Sarkar Sonargaon.*

Isā Khān Masnad Ali, the most noted of the so-called Bara Bhuyas of Bengal, was the son of Kāli Das Gazdāni, a Bāis Rajput of Oudh, who turned Muhammadan under the title of Sulaiman Khān, when Husain Shah was ruler of Bengal (1493-1520) and rose to the position of Dewān under Husain Shāh's successors, Bāhādur Shāh and Jalāluddin. Isā Khān's mother was a daughter of Jalāluddin, and in the early years of Akbar's reign he took advantage of the minority of Jalāluddin's son to establish himself as an independent prince with headquarters at Khizirpur and Sonargāon, both near Nārāyanganj. In 1582, when Todar Mal settled Bengal on behalf of Akbar, Isā Khān rendered great assistance and was left in charge of Sarkārs Bajuha and Sonargāon. He fortified Sonargāon and built several other forts. This raised the Emperor's suspicions, and Isā found himself attacked by Sāhabāz Khān in command of an imperial army. In spite of some early successes, Khizirpur was captured, and Isā Khān seeing that he was powerless

* Mr. Stapleton thinks that to make 22 Kāgmāri and Atia should go together instead of the two Bardakhats.

against the full force of the Delhi throne, devoted his attention to establishing a principality north of the Brāhmaputra at the expense of the Koch chieftains. He turned Lakhan out of Jangalbāri and then extended his sway to Goalpāra, building forts at Rangamatia and Sherpur. In 1592 he had to meet a new army under Mān Singh. Sonargaon was lost, and Isā Khān was besieged in Agārasindur. After two days' hard fighting, he challenged Mān Singh to single combat and won the admiration of his foe by returning his sword after he had disarmed him. He was taken to Delhi and imprisoned by Akbar, who released him on hearing the full story of the fight at Agārasindur. He was given the title of Masnad Ali and sent back with a *sanad* for the 22 parganas, four of which, Khāliājurī, Nasurijiāl, Bhawal and Sherpur were made over to the courtiers who accompanied him back from Delhi.

Isā Khān died at Baktarpur, leaving two sons Musā Khān and Mahammad Khān. The grandson of Mahammad Khān, Hayat Khān, got a new *sanad* for 11 of the 22 parganas, including Pardakhat, Pardakhat Mogra, Kurikhai, Singdha, Sonargāon, Katraba, Darzibāzu, Joār Hosēnpur, Hazrādi, Maheswardi and Jafarshāhi. His son Haibat Khān separated from his cousins and established himself at Haibatnagar Nagua, 6 miles west of Jangalbāri, taking the four parganas Bardakhat, Sonargāon, Mogra and Joār Hosēnpur, to which were afterwards added Maheswardi, Singdha and Darzibazu by right of inheritance from his cousin Satif Khān, whose only daughter, Fatima Bibi, he had married. Haibat Khān's son Abdullah failed to obey Lord Clive's summons to take settlement, and the former four parganas were settled with other zamindars.

During the minority of Abdullah's two sons the remaining three parganas which had been inherited from Fatima were settled with one Golām Ali of Bānglābazar, Dacca, but the settlement was cancelled and a new *sanad* granted. The present proprietress of Haibatnagar, in the fourth generation from Abdullah, is married to Dewān Alim Dād Khān, a descendant of the Jangalbāri branch.

When the two branches separated, four sons of Mānahar Khān, grandson of Musā Khān, survived. As has been seen 3 parganas devolved from the eldest son to the Haibatnagar branch, Latif Khān living at Jangalbāri had 10 annas of Hazrādi and Mahābat Khān with his home at Jafrabād had 6 annas. Adam Khān received Kurikhāi, but this was soon sold to Bhabani Kishor Acharjya of Muktagacha. The fifth son's share

was Katraba, but on his death it was divided between Latif and Mahabat in the same shares as Hazrādi. Latif Khān had two sons. The share of the younger "Panchani" was squandered away. The Para Panchani was also so mismanaged, that the Katraba pargana had to be sold at auction, and on the advice of a Deputy Collector in 1800 the Hazrādi pargana was made over to Government for a permanent mālikānā of Rs. 3,840, and the existing lessees registered as khārijā tālukdārs under separate tauzi numbers. In 1837 the revenue-free mahāl of Jangalbāri was made khās by Government, but Rahimdad lodged a suit and obtained Rs. 32,000 as mesne profits.

The Aich family of Jasodāl near Kishorganj, as described in an article by Mr. Stapleton in the "J. A. S. B." of 1910, is also connected with this pargana. The family are Kayasthas, descended from one Bhuban Aich. Devibar Aich, sixth in descent from Bhuban Aich, was the first of the family to settle in Mymensingh, and his grandson Govinda Hāzri was given the two parganas of Hāzradi and Hosenshāhi by Alāuddin Husain or Nasarat Shāh about 1520. There was fighting between Govinda's son Rājā Ganik Chandra and the great Isā Khān, which resulted in the death of the former by a treacherous stratagem. Local tradition says that a battle at Kukurdia took place after Isā Khān's return from Delhi with Akbar's *sanad* for the 22 parganas in 1594, but it is more probable that Isā Khān was master of all the country round Jangalbāri as a result of his campaigns against the Koches before 1586.

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